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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Report on the first and second regular sessions and annual session of 2013

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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Report on the first and second regular sessions and annual session of 2013

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Part one
First regular session of 2013

Held at United Nations Headquarters from
5 to 8 February 2013

I. Organization of the session

A. Election of officers of the Executive Board

1. The Executive Board elected as President, Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations; and as Vice-Presidents, Ferit Hoxha, Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations, George Wilfred Talbot, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, Mohammad Khazaee, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations and Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations.

B. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director (item 1)

2. The President of the Executive Board welcomed the participants, saying he would chair the deliberations in a spirit of openness and constructive dialogue. He said the guiding principle of the work of the Executive Board was "the best interests of the child", as contained in article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Emphasizing the humanitarian crises in the Syrian Arab Republic and other areas, he reminded the Board members that the state of the world's children was far from perfect and much more needed to be done to relieve the suffering of children and build a better future for them.

3. He highlighted the long-standing relationship of Finland with UNICEF, beginning 65 years ago when, after the Second World War, the children of Finland began receiving assistance from the organization. Only three years later, Finland was able to become a donor country thanks largely to the help received. He noted that education, child and maternal health and nutrition were key priorities for Finland, and expressed the commitment of his country to supporting the universal mandate of UNICEF.

4. He said 2013 was a year when much would be accomplished and decided regarding work on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, on the post-2015 agenda, and on the next UNICEF medium-term strategic plan. He stressed that UNICEF had a key role to play in advocating that the well-being and rights of children remained a priority in future development agendas and goals.

5. In his opening remarks, the Executive Director welcomed the new President, emphasizing that the President's keen interest and engagement in UNICEF were already widely appreciated. He also gave a warm welcome to the four new Bureau members and the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, who would participate in the special focus session on the collaboration between the World Bank and UNICEF.

6. The Executive Director stressed that only 1,000 days were left before the 2015 Millennium Development Goals deadline. There was much progress to celebrate: more children were surviving and thriving; gaps had narrowed in primary school enrolment for girls and boys; and more children enjoyed access to clean drinking water and sanitation. However, too many children, especially the most disadvantaged, were being left behind, their rights denied. To help accelerate results

in reducing under-five mortality, UNICEF was leading a global movement, "Committing to child survival: a promise renewed". Since its launch in June 2012, 172 Governments and over 400 non-governmental organizations had joined. A similar sense of urgency was driving the broad alliance in the fight against HIV/AIDS, he said, noting several advances made, including through the use of new technologies and medicines.

7. Reporting on results remained key to the success of all programmes, he said, noting that the UNICEF Monitoring Results for Equity System was increasingly being adopted by United Nations partners in the field and valued by government partners. He was working with the Chair of the United Nations Development Group to encourage other United Nations agencies to adopt the tool, as this common platform would be a significant contribution to the "Delivering as one" initiative.

8. Complementing the monitoring results for equity system was a new tool for analysing disaggregated data, the multiple overlapping deprivation analysis. This tool was developed by UNICEF to help identify, locate and reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children, particularly girls, children with disabilities, nomadic children and those living in fragile contexts.

9. Other notable innovations had been developed with partners in health, education and child protection, involving the repurposing of information technologies to reach the most disadvantaged and improve results for children. The use of rapid short message service, for example, was helping in the registration of births. Innovations such as virtual platforms were especially useful in reducing costs for South-South and triangular cooperation.

10. UNICEF was striving to become more efficient, cost-effective and transparent. A number of reviews were under way to streamline processes, improve effectiveness and reduce costs. UNICEF was aiming to reduce its headquarters budget by some $2.3 million, focusing on travel and consultancies. Further advances in these areas would be helped by evaluations and audits, by discussions at the Executive Board and by further cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and other United Nations partners.

11. The year 2013 would be one of urgent action for UNICEF, especially in developing the medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017 and in helping to develop a common action plan to implement the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The next medium-term strategic plan, he said, would take into account the recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and reflect discussions on the post-2015 agenda.

12. He highlighted the acute challenge for UNICEF of dwindling core resources, which had declined by 7 per cent from 2011. Core resources were essential, allowing UNICEF to invest in underfunded countries and sectors, support innovations and respond rapidly to new emergencies.

13. Turning to cooperation with the World Bank, he highlighted the excellent opportunity provided by the new leadership at the Bank for working with UNICEF to accelerate progress towards the 2015 Goals and beyond. He envisioned a range of partnership with the Bank — in areas such as health and education, and on issues such as equity and poverty. The partnership is grounded in common principles, notably: innovation; capacity-building; working with Governments to engage

communities and address local priorities; and results-based programming, monitoring and reporting.

C. Adoption of the agenda (item 3)

14. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2013/1) for the session.

15. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced the number of credentials that had been submitted, with the final totals as follows: 39 observer delegations, 1 intergovernmental organization, 3 international organizations and other entities, 2 non-governmental organizations and 7 National Committees for UNICEF.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council (item 4)

16. The document (E/2013/6-E/ICEF/2013/3) was introduced by the Director, Policy and Strategy. A report on recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (E/ICEF/2013/6) was also included under this agenda item. Deputy Executive Director Geeta Rao Gupta commented that the annual report responded to the request of the Executive Board in its decision 2012/1 for greater emphasis on challenges, lessons learned and trends.

17. Delegations welcomed the report, especially its strong emphasis on equity. They underlined that this cost-effective focus would help to achieve rapid impact in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. Along with equity, it was suggested that the organization include impartiality, innovation and accountability in its core principles. Other suggestions were to strengthen the application of the human rights-based approach in UNICEF-assisted programmes and to more strongly emphasize the link between humanitarian actions and development programmes.

18. Speakers made a number of constructive suggestions for preparation of the next UNICEF medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017. In particular, delegations recommended that the plan highlight: equity; child survival and health; education; child protection; gender equality and gender mainstreaming; strategic partnerships; South-South and triangular cooperation; national capacity-building; and enhanced reporting on results. In all these areas, investing in the most disadvantaged and excluded children was essential.

19. Overall, they said, the medium-term strategic plan needed to incorporate the relevant recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, implementation of which should be a top priority for UNICEF, and priority issues discussed regarding the post-2015 development agenda. For the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, UNICEF should work with its sister United Nations agencies to develop a common analytical framework and a set of concrete and measurable follow-up indicators.

20. Delegations called for an emphasis on partnerships across the board. UNICEF was commended for the strong and growing cooperation with the World Bank, especially at the country level, and its focus on equity. This focus provided a means to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to help shape the post-2015 agenda. Several important areas of cooperation were noted: "upstream" work, early childhood development, water, sanitation and health, global polio eradication, initiatives to abolish school fees, gender and the protection of women. Collaboration was also welcomed in social protection and safety nets in order to manage risks in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

21. In addition to the World Bank, delegations urged UNICEF to continue strengthening strategic partnerships with multilateral institutions, other international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, and regional banks. UNICEF was asked why fewer than half of its country offices were cooperating with these banks.

22. The need for expanded capacity-building also figured prominently in the discussion. At the country level it was important to concentrate on local communities as well as "upstream" institutions. Efforts should also cover both monitoring and evaluation, with results in these areas transmitted promptly to decision makers. The monitoring results for equity system and the multiple overlapping deprivation analysis would be useful tools in this regard. Benchmarks should be developed to measure country office performance in capacity-building.

23. While commending UNICEF for the fact that nearly 60 per cent of its country offices supported initiatives in South-South and triangular cooperation, delegations encouraged greater efforts in this area, with a particular focus on least developed and middle-income countries. One delegation suggested that the United Nations agencies develop a common framework and joint tools in this area.

24. Many delegations congratulated UNICEF for its crucial work in promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming — in both humanitarian and development contexts. Nevertheless, concern was expressed by some about the inadequate integration of gender equality across all programmes and policies of the organization. UNICEF was encouraged to fully integrate strong gender equality outcomes in the new medium-term strategic plan. Delegations welcomed the implementation of the gender equality marker in regional and country offices. They also welcomed the support given to the implementation of the gender marker of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. UNICEF was requested to develop follow-up measures to address gaps identified by these markers.

25. Delegations commented that capacity-building was key to promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming. UNICEF was commended for its efforts to build the capacity of country systems for data collection and disaggregated statistics on gender. It was recommended that qualitative research complement these efforts, providing a fuller picture of complex issues such as gender-based violence. Delegations also encouraged UNICEF to help to build capacity in this area among United Nations agencies. UNICEF was widely praised for its increased engagement with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and for the piloting of the system-wide action plan. One delegation stressed the importance of joint initiatives on gender, welcoming the results of the plan of action on gender equality, 2010-2012.

26. Internally, it was recommended that UNICEF aim to embed gender equality across its core systems. It was important to avoid creating parallel systems of planning, monitoring and evaluation. UNICEF was commended for making progress towards the target of ensuring that 50 per cent of its staff members at P-5 level and above were women.

27. UNICEF was commended for its humanitarian operations, especially in several recent crises. Delegations made specific suggestions for improving humanitarian work: strongly link relief, recovery and development; continue efforts with other agencies to improve efficiency and implement the "Transformative agenda"; continue to focus on children requiring special assistance; strengthen the resilience of communities in disaster preparedness; and increase assistance given to the reintegration of children who have been victims of armed conflicts.

28. UNICEF was also commended for maintaining modest annual increases in income despite the global financial situation. For this, special thanks was given to the National Committees for UNICEF. However, nearly every delegation who intervened expressed concern about the decrease in core funding relative to the total. They also shared their misgivings about the drop in thematic funding and the amount of private funding sources. To overcome these challenges, UNICEF was encouraged to develop a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy and to widen its donor base.

29. The efforts of UNICEF to reduce costs, including through the adoption of the PaperSmart (largely paperless) method for Executive Board sessions, were appreciated, as were the various initiatives to improve organizational efficiency. UNICEF was urged to implement the principle of full cost recovery as outlined in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and to adopt the rate of 8 per cent included in the draft decision on cost recovery.

30. UNICEF was also called upon to increase its work with other United Nations agencies in a number of areas: the simplification and harmonization of business practices, the streamlining of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the implementation of common programmes and the enhancement of knowledge management. Delegations recommended that the monitoring results for equity system and the multiple overlapping deprivation analysis be shared with other agencies to improve the evidence base of the United Nations, particularly regarding disadvantaged children. Speakers expressed appreciation for the contributions of UNICEF to the independent evaluation of "Delivering as one" and development of the standard operating procedures. In line with these efforts, UNICEF was called upon to strengthen support for the resident coordinator system, including by encouraging qualified staff members to take up resident coordinator posts.

31. The urgency of meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goals was underscored, especially those related to child survival and maternal and child health, education, HIV/AIDS and protecting and ensuring the rights of children. One delegation described their country's outstanding progress in polio eradication. Several speakers voiced appreciation for the contribution of UNICEF to launching "A promise renewed", noting that the initiative's pledge had been signed by almost all Member States.

32. It was recommended that future annual reports concentrate more on results, including the attribution of the work of UNICEF, and on analysing trends, especially in implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In general, a more systematic, structured and comprehensive approach to future reporting would be appreciated. More effort should also be made to integrate several UNICEF Executive Board reports to reduce redundancy.

33. For future Executive Board sessions, delegations said they looked forward to a discussion on child protection, a special focus on least developed countries and a formal agenda item on humanitarian response.

34. In his response to the comments, the Director, Policy and Strategy, expressed appreciation for the feedback and clarified that the drop in "Other resources — emergency" funding from 2010 to 2011 had to do with the fact that the year 2011 did not have as many crises attracting large-scale funding. He agreed with delegations that it would be useful to look more analytically at trends in reporting on results. The Deputy Director of Governance, United Nations and Multilateral Affairs emphasized the importance UNICEF attached to the resident coordinator system and how crucial it was for United Nations agencies to come up with a proposal on modalities for sharing the costs of the system, as mandated in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

35. This view was underscored by the Executive Director, who said that it was vital that a decision be taken on this issue at the meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in April 2013. If agencies could not reach an agreement, the whole resident coordinator system could be in jeopardy. Responding to other comments, he said he welcomed the endorsement of the monitoring results for equity system, noting that it was necessary to work with Governments on its use. He supported the suggestions on how agencies could work better as one. He said, for instance, that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review could become a very practical vehicle for the whole United Nations system to work together on behalf of children, women and others. He recommended that United Nations partners make the UNDAF simpler and more strategic. If "Delivering as one" were to be sustainable, delivering, monitoring and reporting on results were essential. He said he hoped that a common action plan and standard operating procedures for "Delivering as one" could be worked out soon. He asked Executive Board members to share their thoughts on innovative ways to raise resources for thematic funding and called on Governments that had not yet signed the pledge on "A promise renewed" to do so, joining all those working to end preventable child deaths by 2035.

36. The Executive Board took note of the report on the recommendations of JIU and adopted decision 2013/1 (see annex).

B. Report on the end-of-cycle review of the medium-term strategic plan for 2006-2013 (item 5)

C. Updated road map to and outline of the medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017 (item 6)

37. Deputy Executive Director Geeta Rao Gupta thanked Executive Board members for their engagement in the review and preparation processes. She affirmed that lessons learned from the current medium-term strategic plan, as well as ongoing discussions in important global processes, would serve as key inputs for the next plan. She noted that promoting equity would be at the heart of the next medium-term strategic plan, which would outline expected impact-level results for children, along with outcomes, outputs and strategies to achieve those results.

38. The Director, Policy and Strategy, presented the reports (E/ICEF/2013/4 and E/ICEF/2013/5). He said the review confirmed that UNICEF was partnering effectively on rights issues but revealed significant challenges facing children and the realization of their rights. The equity focus, he said, would streamline UNICEF efforts in protecting and promoting children's rights while strengthening linkages between humanitarian action and development. The plan would reconfigure the current five focus areas into seven impact-level results, with new areas being water and sanitation, exploitation and violence, and poverty and discrimination. It would also improve monitoring of results.

39. Delegations welcomed the reports. They agreed with the strong emphasis on equity to address poverty and discrimination alongside three cross-cutting normative principles — human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. These, they also agreed, should be mainstreamed throughout the organization's work. Many said they hoped to see them also clearly integrated into the corresponding results framework to reflect a strong strategic focus. Some delegations highlighted the importance of mainstreaming gender equality and the strengthening of disaggregated data in that area. Others noted the utility of learning from the challenges encountered in implementing the previous plan, particularly in setting priorities and strengthening accountability. Many welcomed the improved management and monitoring of results, which would increase the focus on impact and sustainability of UNICEF-assisted programmes.

40. Many speakers urged UNICEF to operationalize the quadrennial comprehensive policy review recommendations, particularly those on advancing "Delivering as one" and United Nations system-wide coherence. They also encouraged the strengthening of the human rights-based approach to programming in implementing humanitarian and development programmes. Some asked for more information on the linkages to climate change as well as urbanization and migration. Others emphasized the importance of social protection systems, including universal access to healthcare and equitable early childhood care.

41. Delegations said that it was crucial to track progress through the use of transparent and comprehensible indicators within a consistent and dynamic results framework. They welcomed the proposed framework covering the full results chain, with indicators set at each level and including baselines, milestones and targets. This effort should be harmonized with that of other United Nations organizations.

42. It was important to ensure that programmes were sustainable by encouraging national ownership and contributing to building national capacity, particularly in the least developed countries. Some delegations suggested that several of the health-related areas could be clustered, with child protection integrated into the other impact areas.

43. Delegations acknowledged the strong emphasis placed on an integrated approach to humanitarian action and development, noting their common linkages to child protection, to building community resilience and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Also highlighted was the importance of risk management in humanitarian and development efforts, including in conflicts and emergencies. UNICEF was asked how it planned to implement a humanitarian strategy in coordination with its partners under the common approach of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations.

44. Many delegations encouraged the use of innovative approaches as a way to increase accessibility, scale up interventions and leverage results for disadvantaged and excluded children, including children with disabilities. Others stressed the importance of innovation in strengthening education, including technology literacy, secondary education and education in emergencies. In this regard, some highlighted the role of a strengthened, equity-focused research and knowledge management function. This would support evidence-based advocacy and work with partners on national policy frameworks.

45. Some speakers pointed to the importance of aligning country-level cooperation with recommendations of human rights treaty bodies, particularly in strengthening child protection systems. Others noted the importance of continuing efforts to combat AIDS and trafficking, especially in fragile contexts, and welcomed the increased focus on adolescents, although some cautioned that it should not distract from efforts in early childhood development and health.

46. Delegations noted the opportunities for making partnerships more strategic, including through cooperation with civil society and grassroots movements and through the greater participation of target populations. Many welcomed the participation of UNICEF in regional and inter-agency mechanisms to broaden partnership cooperation and to improve the humanitarian response of the United Nations system.

47. In response, the Deputy Executive Director said that implementing the quadrennial comprehensive policy review recommendations would enhance effectiveness and efficiency, coherence with United Nations agencies, and strategic partnerships with Governments and civil society. Acknowledging that UNICEF needed to focus on priorities but remain flexible, she said that the attention given to adolescents was a conscious choice to sustain the important investments made in the first decade of a child's life.

48. The Director, Policy and Strategy, acknowledged that the medium-term strategic plan needed to articulate clear priorities and ensure accountability but noted that some challenges would be best addressed through the organization's reporting and accountability systems. He said the reconfiguration of focus areas was a result of lessons learned from the previous plan and did not reflect any prioritization among the areas. He explained that UNICEF would link humanitarian action to development work in a mutually reinforcing way. He underscored that the

new dynamic results matrices could be tested through the lenses of the normative principles while remaining flexible enough to allow for changes in strategies in response to the national priorities of programme countries.

49. The Executive Director affirmed the importance of risk management and shared risk, particularly as UNICEF moved into increasingly difficult areas in its work. He noted that education and innovation would be an important priority in the new medium-term strategic plan, especially education in emergencies. He underlined that everything UNICEF did was about the rights of children, which were inseparable from equity. He acknowledged the difficulty of attribution in reporting results under "Delivering as one" but reaffirmed that UNICEF would seek to present them as clearly and honestly as possible. He underscored the crucial importance of disaggregated data, as they helped UNICEF to focus not only on disadvantaged and excluded areas but also on evidence-based advocacy. It was crucial to combine advocacy and innovation, particularly within the United Nations system and through new kinds of networks and horizontal partnerships that would help to transform the world.

D. Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings (item 7)

50. The Director, Programmes, highlighted advances made in the HIV/AIDS response, emphasizing the importance of partnerships and the critical nature of UNICEF cross-sectoral work. The Chief of the HIV/AIDS Section presented the report (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.3).

51. Agreeing that an AIDS-free generation was within reach, delegations welcomed UNICEF leadership in global efforts to fight the scourge. In particular they commended the work of UNICEF in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, notably in sub-Saharan Africa. Some delegations inquired about simplifying some interventions and treatment protocols.

52. Stressing the importance of harmonization, delegations encouraged UNICEF, in the next medium-term strategic plan, to align its HIV programme priorities with those of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the action agenda related to gender equality. It was noted that gender inequality was a driver of HIV risk. Some delegations recognized the successful division of labour among UNAIDS co-sponsors and the collaboration with the (United States) President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief on bottleneck analyses.

53. Delegations supported the emphasis on adolescents, particularly in preventing new HIV infections. Some delegations inquired about the collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on HIV among young people. Others welcomed the more targeted, evidence-based approach on reaching key affected populations, particularly adolescents. One delegation highlighted the Kenyan Shuga radio initiative, which is raising awareness in seven countries.

54. In response, the Chief of the HIV/AIDS Section said that in the next medium-term strategic plan UNICEF would align its HIV/AIDS programming with the UNAIDS strategy. He noted that UNAIDS was developing adolescent-specific

guidance for key affected populations. UNESCO was a key partner of UNICEF, particularly on sexuality education for adolescents. UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) were co-conveners of the inter-agency task team on adolescents and young people, and UNICEF was working with the World Health Organization in simplifying treatment protocols.

55. He highlighted that political leadership, adequate resources and clear accountability had led to significant progress in the 22 focus countries for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and reported that UNICEF was applying technological innovations to improve paediatric treatment. He said that new monitoring and evaluation efforts aimed to collect better data on adolescents, disaggregated by age, sex and key affected populations.

56. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/2 (see annex).

E. UNICEF programme cooperation (item 8)

1. Approval of revised country and common country programme documents discussed at the second regular session of 2012

57. The Executive Board approved the revised country programme documents for Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, Libya, Nicaragua, South Africa and the Sudan, and the revised common country programme document for Pakistan.

58. The representative of Pakistan said that UNICEF was its key technical partner, providing valuable assistance to strengthening the social sector and to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. Deploring the recent terrorist attacks against polio workers, he said Pakistan attached the highest priority to polio eradication and was investing substantial resources to assure the safety and security of vaccination teams and rid the country of polio.

59. The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo said the excellent cooperation between the Government and UNICEF was helping the country to overcome its vulnerable situation brought on by conflict. He also welcomed the strategic partnership with the World Bank and encouraged its further strengthening. The representative emphasized the need for additional funding and for bolstering national capacity to implement the new country programme as a way to enhance national ownership.

60. The representative of Libya thanked UNICEF for its assistance during the country's struggle for liberation and for support given to programmes helping children overcome the suffering they endured during the struggle. During this time of transition, his country had resolved to focus on the well-being of children and the realization of their rights.

61. Speaking on the current country programme of cooperation for 2012-2016, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed appreciation for the efforts of UNICEF and the country team. The programme was based on the principle of national ownership and was centred on the fifth national plan on economic and social development.

2. Draft country programme documents

62. The Executive Board approved, on a no-objection basis, the country programme document for Eritrea for 2013-2016, as contained in document E/ICEF/2013/P/L.1, and adopted decision 2013/3 (see annex).

63. The representative of Eritrea said that implementation of the country programme would help to consolidate gains made in critical areas such as reducing child mortality and closing the development gap affecting vulnerable groups in hard-to-reach areas. He noted that Governments needed the opportunity to develop policies that would support home-grown innovations as well as strategies that reflected conditions and priorities specific to each country.

64. The Executive Director emphasized that the country programmes of cooperation were at the heart of the work of UNICEF. He noted that the documents supported national priorities and the principles of national sovereignty and ownership. He expressed appreciation for the comments made on the importance of work throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo, not just the eastern portion, and for the commitment of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan to supporting the polio eradication campaign.

65. Echoing these remarks, Vice-President George Wilfred Talbot made a special appeal for more assistance to be given to UNICEF to continue its important work.

F. Discussion on recent global thematic evaluations (item 9)

66. The Director, Evaluation, presented the three global thematic evaluation reports on the work of UNICEF — early childhood development; life skills education; and the application of a human rights-based approach to programming. The Director, Programmes, summarized the management response to the recommendations of the three reports.

67. Delegations welcomed the recommendations, which were fundamental to the preparation of the next medium-term strategic plan, and the management response, which showed a strong commitment to follow-up. It was important that the evaluations and response received attention throughout the organization as well as adequate resources. This effort showed how important it was to have a strong and independent evaluation unit. Several delegations proposed that the Executive Board follow up on the management response in 2014.

68. Delegations said the evaluation on a human rights-based approach to programming showed the need to clarify linkages between that approach and equity, including in the following areas: systematic integration of gender equality; sustaining global leadership and engagement; and building capacity and demonstrating progress in advancing the human rights-based approach. The approach should be integrated into the medium-term strategic plan results framework.

69. On early childhood development, some delegations welcomed the recommendation to mainstream the approach into national policies, plans and services. Others noted opportunities for further capacity-building work on gathering reliable data at all levels, including the regional level through work with the Economic Community of West African States. Regarding life skills education, it was

noted that such skills were needed to empower the young and protect them from harm later in life.

70. Delegations welcomed the development of a results-based management system within the medium-term strategic plan framework. They underscored that the evaluations highlighted the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems. It was suggested to strengthen the collection and use of disaggregated data and promote the meaningful participation of beneficiaries in all phases of programmes to strengthen results-based management. Many delegations noted the difficulty in reaching disadvantaged and vulnerable groups due to a lack of access and of reliable data. This was particularly evident in difficult contexts and humanitarian situations. It was important to take a systematic approach in assessing and addressing bottlenecks.

71. In response, the Executive Director affirmed that UNICEF had learned from the evaluations and from the comments of the Executive Board members. He acknowledged for a clear linkage between a human rights-based approach to programming and equity, and stressed that the monitoring results for equity system was a part of the approach. He noted that early childhood development offered an opportunity to integrate approaches, given the devastating effect of deprivations in early childhood for the rest of a child's life.

72. The Director, Evaluation, noted that increasing attention was being given to management responses to various evaluations at different levels of the organization. The Director, Programmes, confirmed that UNICEF would integrate the lessons learned through the evaluations into the new medium-term strategic plan and use them to strengthen national capacity to reach the most disadvantaged children.

G. The road map to an integrated budget: joint report of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women (item 10)

73. Deputy Executive Director Martin Mogwanja made some introductory remarks on the report (E/ICEF/2013/8), which was a joint review of the impact of cost definitions and classifications of activities on the harmonized cost-recovery rates. He said the draft decision, once adopted by the UNICEF Executive Board, would inform the UNICEF draft integrated budget and medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017. The Comptroller then presented the report.

74. Delegations expressed appreciation for the fact that the document represented close collaboration among the agencies and was aligned with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. They welcomed several features of the proposal: (a) the harmonized methodology and recovery rate of 8 per cent based on the common cost classification category approved by the three Executive Boards; (b) the arrangements for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the new methodology; and (c) the request in the decision for a comprehensive assessment in 2016, in the context of midterm reviews.

75. Speakers praised the "robust" draft decision, which had already been adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA/United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and was expected to be adopted by UN-Women immediately following the close of the UNICEF Executive Board. They commended the constructiveness and openness

shown by all delegations involved in drafting the decision. In particular, they commended the innovative and successful joint facilitation process, thanking the four facilitators representing the three Executive Boards, who they said spared no effort to enable Board members to reach a decision: Hinke Nauta (UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS); John Mosoti (UNICEF); and Junichi Sumi and Roberto De León Huerta (UN-Women).

76. One speaker, who addressed the cost-recovery issue under a different agenda item, hailed the decision as a landmark achievement. She noted that Executive Board decisions had great impact in programme countries such as hers. She said her delegation had participated with interest in the deliberations on draft decisions to ensure the success of the process.

77. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/5 (see annex).

H. UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2011 and report of the Board of Auditors (item 11)

78. The reports, contained in document (A/67/5/Add.2), were presented by the Comptroller following introductory remarks by Deputy Executive Director Martin Mogwanja. The Deputy Executive Director noted that the audited financial statements, which are the principal and most public reporting on the financial activities of UNICEF, had been given an unqualified ("clean") audit opinion. Furthermore, the Board of Auditors had expressed satisfaction with the status of implementation of the prior recommendations.

79. The Comptroller noted that UNICEF had received 29 audit recommendations, compared with 50 on the report for the previous biennium. He emphasized that UNICEF took these recommendations very seriously, had implementation plans in place with clear timelines and accountabilities and was engaged in regular dialogue with the external auditors.

80. One of the main recommendations was that UNICEF should improve the oversight of National Committees for UNICEF. The auditors had expressed concern about the recognition of income from National Committees, whom they viewed as internal agents of UNICEF. The auditors recommended that UNICEF report Committee income and expenditure as "gross" instead of "net" in its financial statements. The Comptroller noted, however, that this model would increase both the income and expenditure amounts of UNICEF shown in the statements. It was an outstanding issue under discussion with the auditors. He further noted that in the interest of transparency UNICEF had disclosed the gross income and expenditure of the Committees in a note to the financial statements.

81. Delegations commended UNICEF for the unqualified audit report, for the reduction in the number of recommendations, and for the timely efforts to implement recommendations and provide management responses.

82. Much discussion centred on the recommendations concerning the National Committees. Delegations said these should receive careful attention so that the public image of UNICEF was safeguarded and reputational risks reduced. In general, UNICEF should strengthen its oversight and monitoring of the Committees,

including their financial performance, and encourage Committees to minimize financial costs. Specifically, delegations recommended that UNICEF and the Committees: (a) strengthen and harmonize their cooperation agreements, making them more transparent; (b) ensure that 75 per cent of the funds raised were received by UNICEF and promptly transferred; and (c) ensure that the remaining 25 per cent were accounted for and spent only on activities directly related to the work of UNICEF.

83. Delegations inquired about steps UNICEF had taken on the auditors' recommendations and requested that UNICEF share with the Executive Board the conclusions of the external audits of the Committees.

84. Turning to another salient issue, the harmonized approach to cash transfers, a number of delegations raised concerns about the need for strengthened oversight. This was necessary, they said, in order to reduce the risk of inappropriate utilization of transfers by partners, and possibly even fraud. Speakers encouraged UNICEF to cooperate with other members of the United Nations Development Group to ensure that common harmonized approach to cash transfers guidelines be followed systematically, revising the guidelines if necessary.

85. Also emphasized was the need for strengthening compliance with regulations and guidance for: procurement, assets and inventory management, after-service health insurance, recruitment processes and vacancy rates and the monitoring of country offices. Delegations requested that improved evidence-based planning, budgeting and reporting, which was recommended by the Board of Auditors, be taken into account in the new medium-term strategic plan and in the integrated budget as well as in guidance to the entire organization.

86. The Deputy Executive Director emphasized that the National Committees were legal entities, each of whom enters into agreements with UNICEF through a standard cooperation agreement that forms the basis of their relationship with UNICEF. Since mid-2012, when the audit was released, UNICEF had worked with individual Committees and the Standing Group of National Committees to address the reporting of income, the timely transmission of funds to UNICEF and retention rates, among other issues. Stronger monitoring systems had also been established in relation to compliance of National Committee activities with the cooperation agreement.

87. Each Committee was preparing a joint strategic plan with UNICEF, addressing priority activities such as resource mobilization and "education for development" and indicating how funds would be used. Every year each Committee undertakes an external audit, which is made public and is available on the Committee's website.

88. Regarding income and expenditure for Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP), he noted that it would be reported in the UNICEF integrated budget for 2014-2017 and as usual in the workplan and budget of PFP presented each year to the Executive Board for approval.

89. The Comptroller underscored that National Committees are independent entities regulated by their own national authorities established under national laws. It was the view of UNICEF that Committee accounts should not be part of the UNICEF accounts. A compromise on this had been reached for the previous biennium with the Board of Auditors. It was hoped that a common understanding could be reached with the auditors.

90. UNICEF had already put in place an implementation plan for addressing recommendations and observations made by the auditors. All relevant UNICEF offices produce plans, which are monitored by headquarters, and provide quarterly updates on progress.

91. On addressing the harmonized approach to cash transfers, he said work was under way with other agencies to improve the guidelines and strengthen assurance activities at the country level. Addressing the question on implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), he said that much progress had been made, and UNICEF would be submitting its first financial statements under IPSAS to the Board of Auditors on 31 March 2013. Finally, he assured Board members that vacancy rates had been reduced, as noted, for example, in the update on vacancy rates given to the Executive Board by the acting Director of the Division of Human Resources at the first regular session of 2012.

92. The Executive Director emphasized the importance of the issue of how National Committee income was reported. He noted that no external auditors in the last 60 years had suggested that the National Committee income be recorded as UNICEF income. If this were to be the case, the status of the Committees as independent legal entities could be challenged, with the result that their ability to raise resources could be seriously hindered. He underscored the importance of what the National Committees do and the amounts of funds they raise for UNICEF — about one third of its income.

I. Private fundraising: 2013 workplan and proposed budget (item 12)

93. The Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, presented the report (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.1).

94. Delegations welcomed the report, including information on the efficiency and effectiveness review and the new approach to partnership engagement, and highlighted the importance of private fundraising efforts by the National Committees. Several underscored the importance of new outreach strategies for broadening partnership, particularly with foundations and businesses.

95. Delegations highlighted the commitment of UNICEF to strategic partnerships and encouraged UNICEF to share its considerable experience in that area with other United Nations agencies. Several delegations requested more information on the recommendations of the efficiency and effectiveness review and on their implementation. Some delegations expressed concern about the high operating costs for fundraising, and encouraged UNICEF and the National Committees to reduce costs in line with the recommendations of the Board of Auditors. Others encouraged UNICEF to ensure that fundraising expenses would in the future be charged to both core and non-core resources in line with quadrennial comprehensive policy review recommendations.

96. Some delegations welcomed the establishment of the new Country Office Support Unit to advance resource mobilization efforts in the developing economies in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and expressed interest in engaging with PFP on private-sector fundraising. Others noted the increase in private giving in Latin American countries, and asked for more

information on fundraising strategies in middle-income countries, particularly in Latin America.

97. The Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees provided an update on their fundraising and other activities, highlighting the response to emergencies in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and the Syrian Arab Republic, and pledged support for global campaigns such as "A promise renewed".

98. In response, Deputy Executive Director Martin Mogwanja, clarified that PFP operating expenses would be fully incorporated into the integrated budget starting in 2014, but that PFP would continue to submit annual workplans and budgets for Executive Board approval.

99. The Director, PFP, confirmed that UNICEF would provide more information on efficiencies at the second regular session of 2013, when she would present an overview of the PFP plan for 2014-2017 and provide more details on actions undertaken to reduce the cost structures for private fundraising. She encouraged Board members to provide guidance and feedback at that time. She welcomed the interest of donor and middle-income countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and in Latin America in engaging with PFP on private-sector fundraising and encouraged bilateral discussions on this. In response to the interest expressed in having an in-depth briefing on strategic partnerships with the private sector, including on corporate social responsibility and child rights, she said she would organize such a meeting. She reported that PFP was planning a discussion with other United Nations agencies in Geneva to share experiences in private-sector partnerships and resource mobilization.

100. The Executive Director concluded by noting that the rapid increase in resources mobilized in former programme countries was helping to inform discussions on how UNICEF could best adapt to a changing world.

101. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/6 (see annex).

J. Pledging event (item 13)

102. The Executive Director introduced the annual event, expressing gratitude to partners who have sustained or even expanded support for the work of UNICEF during a time of economic challenge. He said that inadequate regular resources presented a serious challenge, making it difficult for the organization to fulfil its mandate on children's rights. He added that inadequate resources would make it harder to save lives and provide relief after sudden-onset emergencies, to meet underfunded projects, and to innovate and invest in promising new ventures. He urged donors to increase their contributions to regular resources so that UNICEF could fulfil its normative agenda and tackle some of the biggest challenges in promoting and protecting the rights of children and women.

103. The representatives of 12 Governments pledged their support for UNICEF in the total amount of $144 million.[1]

104. The Executive Director thanked the Governments that had made pledges. He said that UNICEF would use the resources in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible, with a singular focus on giving children with the greatest needs the opportunities they deserve and the means to seize them.

K. Other matters (item 14)

Special focus session on the collaboration between the World Bank and UNICEF

105. The President introduced Jim Young Kim, President of the World Bank. In his opening remarks, Dr. Kim emphasized the deep commitment to the focus on equity shared by the World Bank and UNICEF. It was crucial, he said, to "bend the arc of history" by ending extreme poverty and building sustainable growth that would include the poorest and accelerate progress towards a just society. To tackle the enormous challenges that lay ahead, even more collaboration was needed among Governments, United Nations organizations, civil society and multilateral organizations. He noted that the engagement of UNICEF country offices with the Bank had increased and that the partnership had leveraged significant additional resources for UNICEF, including some $944 million of financing for UNICEF-provided procurement services.

106. Delegations enthusiastically welcomed Dr. Kim, calling this session "historic" because it was the first time the President of the World Bank had addressed the Executive Board. They expressed support for the strong collaboration between the World Bank and UNICEF, with its focus on equity, highlighting the overriding goal of ending extreme poverty, and underscoring the importance of innovation and scaling up of initiatives.

107. Looking to the post-2015 agenda, speakers said that it was crucial to go beyond the provision of basic services in order to create transformational change for children. To do this, a systems approach was essential so that people could be empowered with the education, knowledge, skills and tools they needed to eradicate poverty, promote inclusion and strengthen participation and the well-being of all. Delivery of innovation was crucial in ensuring that its benefits reached all children. Equally important was ensuring accessibility, especially for vulnerable children in fragile, low-income, conflict- and disaster-affected areas and children under occupation. Another priority highlighted was economic recovery, including for countries of the Arab Spring and countries in transition. Delegations agreed that more and better cooperation among partners was key to future success.

108. Some delegations commended the two organizations for work done in their countries and in particular for their support for "A promise renewed" and of the buy-

[1] For details of government contributions to regular resources pledged or paid for years 2012 and 2013 (as at 7 February 2013), see "UNICEF regular resources: pledges for 2013" (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.2), available from www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2013-CRP2-Pledging_event-8Feb2013.pdf. Contributions also include pledges received during the United Nations Pledging Conference in November 2012 and those received outside of pledging events. As at 7 February 2013, UNICEF had received total pledges of $231 million for regular resources in 2013 from 30 Governments.

down programme for the polio vaccine. Delegations asked about work with the GAVI Alliance and about constraints that need addressing over the next 10 to 25 years. One delegation, noting that the world had more tools available now than ever before in areas such as nutrition, vaccines and AIDS treatment, asked what could be done differently to scale up the availability and use of these tools. Another question raised was how to create closer collaboration among partners in order to protect vulnerable children and strengthen welfare systems.

109. Dr. Kim replied that to address challenges and achieve scale it was important to ask big questions such as what would it take to accomplish various goals. While it was important to make progress in discussions on climate change and other global issues, concrete actions should be taken where possible to obtain results. Building systems was critical — whether for governance, health care or education. He said that investing in health, education and social protection was building the foundation for future economic growth. With so many innovations accumulating, it was important to get serious about delivery in areas such as vaccines, social safety nets and child protection. He said that achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 should figure urgently on the global agenda and would require a completely new way of thinking about the responsibility of multilateral institutions to work together.

110. The Executive Director noted that the views of the World Bank and UNICEF were almost interchangeable and that collaboration between the two had grown by leaps in recent years. He pointed to five areas for strengthening future collaboration: (a) health and immunization; (b) countries and areas in crisis or post-crisis situations; (c) education, especially regarding the use of new technologies; (d) innovation, which involved taking initiatives to scale, reaching the most disadvantaged and enhancing South-South cooperation; and (e) in the context of the post-2015 agenda, promoting equity and sustainable growth through investment in the social sector.

Provisional list of agenda items for the annual session of 2013

111. The Secretary introduced the list to Executive Board members for their information.

L. Adoption of draft decisions (item 15)

112. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2013/1 to 2013/6 (see annex).

M. Staff awards and closing statements by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board (item 16)

Staff awards

113. The Executive Director explained that UNICEF was reinstating the annual tradition, followed from 1989 to 2005, of giving awards to outstanding staff members who exemplify the organization's commitment to securing results for children and women. The awards went to: (a) the team in Afghanistan for its achievements and bravery in an emergency context; (b) the Banda Aceh Office in Indonesia for the achievements of the country programme in the post-tsunami

context; and (c) the five-member Medical Evacuation Team in South Africa, who in 2011-2012 coordinated the evacuations of 81 staff members and their families from 19 countries.

Closing statements

114. The Executive Director began his statement on a sombre note, highlighting the recent violent attacks on health facilities in Kano State in Nigeria and the attacks on polio workers in Pakistan. In both cases, he noted how the staff members had immediately rededicated themselves to their work for children.

115. The Executive Board session, he said, had been one of the best in his experience for its substantive content. The presentations and discussions had demonstrated the excellent results brought about by the hard work of staff members and partners and the importance of weaving equity and child rights into everything UNICEF does. Discussions also highlighted the prime place of partnerships, including those with Governments, United Nations partners in "Delivering as one", international financial and multilateral institutions and civil society, with special recognition of the work of National Committees for UNICEF. He thanked delegations for their supportive comments about the work of UNICEF in fragile contexts and the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and in particular about the efforts in the polio campaign. He welcomed the greater participation of programme countries in the session, which he said had enriched the discussion. Finally, he thanked the many people who had made the Executive Board session a success, including the newly elected President and Vice-Presidents and the facilitators of the decisions.

116. The President in his statement also welcomed the broad engagement of delegations across all regional groups. He commended the leadership and engagement shown by the Executive Director and his Deputies and the collaborative work of the new Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board.

117. He emphasized that the session had taken place at a defining moment for UNICEF as it prepares its next medium-term strategic plan and integrated budget, guided by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and discussions on the post-2015 agenda in the face of growing complex challenges. To address these challenges, the special focus session had highlighted the need for new questions to be asked and innovative approaches to be taken in partnerships, including the special collaboration between the World Bank and UNICEF.

118. The Executive Boards of the four funds and programmes had adopted a robust decision on cost recovery, with UN-Women expected to follow suit after the end of this session. The decision had involved an innovative and successful joint facilitation approach. He thanked the facilitators of that as well as the other decisions for helping to bring negotiations to a speedy and successful conclusion.

119. He expressed appreciation to those Member States who had pledged funds to help to stem the decline in core resources, giving special praise to the National Committees for their work.

120. Finally, he said, the staff awards were an appropriate way to show appreciation for the dedication of UNICEF staff members, who were doing invaluable work with partners to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and realize their rights.

III. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UN-Women and WFP

121. The present chapter, originally submitted as an addendum to the report of the UNICEF Executive Board on its first regular session of 2013, is a summary of the discussions that took place during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP), held on 4 February 2013. The text was prepared by the secretariats of the funds and programmes and approved by the Presidents of the Executive Boards.

A. Operationalizing the decisions of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review

122. The Acting President of the WFP Executive Board opened the meeting, welcoming the Deputy Secretary-General and the Executive Directors of the six United Nations entities.

123. Introducing the item on behalf of the six entities, the WFP Executive Director welcomed the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for its focus on delivering and demonstrating results and promoting equitable progress for the most vulnerable, while demonstrating greater value for money. She confirmed the commitment of the United Nations Development Group entities to the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and highlighted ways in which this has started, including by giving examples of how it is being mainstreamed into the new WFP strategic plan.

124. The Deputy Secretary-General made reference to the key recommendations in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and stressed that it should guide the United Nations development system on the ground, preparing the system for the post-2015 period. He also reaffirmed the Secretary-General's commitment to its full implementation.

125. Statements were made by over 20 Member States with the following issues emerging:

(a) The comparative advantage of the United Nations development system in post-conflict and transition countries and the need to develop a comprehensive approach to risk management;

(b) The need to focus on inequalities, promote a human rights-based approach to development and green-growth policies;

(c) The centrality of national ownership and that United Nations reform must result in greater value-added at country level, rather than being about "how the United Nations can do better business with itself";

(d) The number of mandates for action in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, including time-bound ones, and the need for prioritization and effective monitoring of its implementation;

(e) A call for improved funding levels and rebalancing of core and non-core resources, including through cost-recovery mechanisms;

(f) The importance of a continued focus on poverty eradication. Some highlighted the problems of inequality in middle-income countries;

(g) Support for "Delivering as one" as the model for implementation;

(h) Stronger results orientation, and the need to develop a robust approach to reporting, including on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

(i) The need to strengthen the resident coordinator system and to burden-share coordination costs;

(j) A call to accelerate progress in simplification and harmonization of business practices, resolving bottlenecks at the Headquarters level;

(k) The need to retain the decision-making authority of the Executive Boards and the important role of the regional commissions;

(l) The need for greater integration with entities of the United Nations Secretariat;

(m) The need for a strengthened culture of evaluations including at the country level.

126. The members of the WFP Executive Board spoke as a group and stressed that the eradication of hunger is a priority for its membership and the dual mandate of WFP, active in both emergencies and development. The representative also highlighted the need to integrate lessons learned in the post-2015 agenda.

127. As first respondent, the UNDP Administrator emphasized the importance of poverty eradication in promoting sustainable development and that internal changes were needed to better deliver results. She referenced efforts made to strengthen and improve the quality of the resident coordinator system, but also the system's need for adequate and predictable resources going forward. The UNICEF Executive Director highlighted efforts made to improve results reporting and urged that the post-2015 agenda focus on inequities. The UNFPA Executive Director made reference to his agency's leadership in developing the standard operating procedures and that the agency will consider new business models to deliver more effectively. The UNOPS Executive Director highlighted the importance of capacity-building and sustainability and welcomed the call to accelerate business practices reform. The WFP Executive Director highlighted the need to consider entities' different funding modalities when adopting the resident coordinator funding scheme. The UN-Women Deputy Executive Director concluded the meeting by expressing appreciation for the strong emphasis on gender and results in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. He highlighted the relevance of a rights-based approach going forward and recognized that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review represents a call for change for broader system-wide coherence.

B. Leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation

128. The President of the UN-Women Executive Board welcomed the representatives of the six United Nations organizations and the two guest speakers. Introducing the background paper on behalf of the six organizations, the UNICEF Executive Director underscored that South-South and triangular cooperation are

growing organically, that they are key components of solutions to global problems, and that United Nations organizations have great potential to play a constructive facilitating role.

129. Presentations were made by two guest speakers: Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, and John Ohiorhenuan of Columbia University.

130. Thereafter 12 delegations from Member States raised the following issues:

(a) South-South cooperation does not replace North-South cooperation and has its own core principles. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review provides key guidance on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. These will require different supporting mechanisms, as they are distinct;

(b) South-South cooperation already accomplishes much, but much more can be done. The United Nations system should step in to provide additional capacity development for countries in the south. The potential of regional arrangements for promoting South-South cooperation should be further applied;

(c) A comprehensive United Nations blueprint for South-South cooperation is needed to reap the benefits made possible by the United Nations comparative advantages. Agency guidance should dovetail with the United Nations guidance, to ensure better coordination at country level;

(d) All agencies should elaborate further on strategies for encouraging private-sector support for South-South cooperation and on means for improved reporting and evaluation;

(e) The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation should continue to be strengthened.

131. Representatives of the six United Nations organizations made the following points:

(a) As first respondent, the UNFPA Executive Director emphasized that the new development landscape in which developing countries increasingly share development cooperation is based on the principles of solidarity, fairness, equality and national ownership;

(b) All six United Nations organizations reaffirmed the unique role of the United Nations in leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation;

(c) South-South and triangular cooperation have been embraced as primary development mechanisms and incorporated into strategic and operational plans by all six organizations. Ongoing efforts are directed towards further mainstreaming;

(d) There are numerous recent examples of successes in supporting South-South and triangular cooperation from each of the six United Nations organizations. Current achievements still only scratch the surface of what is possible;

(e) United Nations organizations' regional involvement continues to evolve in order to better support South-South and triangular cooperation;

(f) The growth of South-South cooperation raises issues of voice, appropriate representation at Executive Boards, and funding, possibly requiring formal discussion;

(g) Private-sector involvement can be encouraged by promoting examples of good public-private partnerships benefiting communities, and supporting adherence to international norms and standards;

(h) Reporting on results should take into account that South-South initiatives are owned by the partner countries, not by United Nations organizations. Emphasis on reporting and evaluation will continue to ensure value is added.

132. Summing up, the UNOPS Executive Director noted that all organizations have clearly recognized the United Nations role in facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation, and the importance of mainstreaming these efforts. The UN-Women Executive Board President closed the meeting by emphasizing that South-South cooperation represents an efficient, effective and inclusive way to achieve transformational change.

Part two
Annual session of 2013

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 18 to 21 June 2013

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements by the President and the Executive Director

133. The President drew attention to the connection between disability and poverty. As shown in the 2013 report on children with disabilities, *The State of the World's Children*, children with disabilities, particularly girls, are more likely to face poverty and lack of access to education and health services. The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would create a good basis to continue efforts against discrimination and towards a world where children have the opportunity to participate, learn and develop to their full potential.

134. In regard to the agenda for the session, he said the draft UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017 was an important tool, and he encouraged members of the Executive Board to focus on providing concrete guidance to UNICEF.

135. The Executive Director said UNICEF was creating a "new normal". Its mission to realize the rights of children everywhere would never change, but how it carried out that mission would continue to evolve. Today's "normal" included the refocus on equity, innovation and greater transparency. He cited some of the achievements of UNICEF and its partners in 2012 in the areas of immunization, education, access to water and reduction of disparity.

136. The draft strategic plan would reflect the discussions on the post-2015 agenda. Drafting the plan had required choosing a limited number of priorities and distinguishing between areas that are stand-alone and those that should be incorporated across all outcomes. Other challenges were to integrate the outcomes and priorities and to build networks between various silos, both programmatically and with other organizations and United Nations agencies.

137. The Syrian conflict was fast becoming a regional crisis. The hardworking staff and resources of UNICEF were stretched to their limits. He would welcome members' ideas on how to mobilize the needed resources and continue responding effectively to the needs of all children in crises.

138. The Fund would continue reassessing internal business practices. Over the last two years, the organization had saved $13.7 million, and a recent assessment by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network found significant improvements in the management effectiveness of UNICEF.

B. Adoption of the agenda

139. The Executive Board adopted the provisional agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session (E/ICEF/2013/10).

140. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 30 observer delegations, including one intergovernmental organization, two international organizations, nine National Committees for UNICEF and three non-governmental organizations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

141. The Executive Director remarked on the progress made and results achieved by UNICEF in its five focus areas, cross-cutting work, and operational effectiveness and efficiency. The report (E/ICEF/2013/11) and its data companion were then introduced by the Director for Policy and Strategy.

142. Many delegations congratulated UNICEF and its partners for the results achieved. Several welcomed the urgency UNICEF had brought to the issue of stunting. They also welcomed the emphasis placed on children from disadvantaged and marginalized backgrounds and on those who are disabled.

143. Speakers expressed appreciation for the significant contribution of UNICEF to increasing the focus on equity, especially as overall progress often concealed widening disparities. The Monitoring Results for Equity System was an essential tool to address those disparities and UNICEF should continue to promulgate its use across the United Nations system.

144. Delegations highlighted the contribution of UNICEF to the collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated data, which had led to strengthened national capacities to monitor the situation of children. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys completed in 2012 provided a wealth of information on indicators used by the United Nations system as a whole.

145. A speaker welcomed the new scope given to the upstream work within country programmes to build stronger national health, education and protection systems through enhanced partnerships such as the GAVI Alliance, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and the Global Education Initiative.

146. Speaking for the Group of African States, a delegation recognized the efforts of UNICEF to strengthen social welfare, social protection, justice, education and health services. UNICEF should review systemic challenges with regard to demonstrating results at the impact level, which would help in the implementation of further interventions and the sharing of lessons learned.

147. The focus on equity was noted in the successful initiatives offering alternatives to education for out-of-school children and youth and in the search for innovative learning options to increase access to education for hard-to-reach and excluded children.

148. As efforts to prevent HIV infections and harmful behaviours among adolescents had not been as successful as efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, speakers urged UNICEF to develop appropriate programming strategies for adolescents. One speaker said that her Government had focused on education, since young people who failed to complete basic education were twice as likely to become infected with HIV.

149. Some delegations said the report could better reflect the importance of gender mainstreaming in UNICEF programming. Future reports should reflect commitments to address gender equality, including by providing figures on gender-related resource allocation and expenditures. The new strategic priority action plan

for gender equality should ensure that future reports state what has been achieved for boys and girls on the ground as a result of the Fund's work.

150. Speakers welcomed the achievements of UNICEF in the area of child protection. One delegation expressed support for creating systems that could provide children with full protection. Another said that the recent meta-analysis of UNICEF child protection programmes was a step in the right direction in demonstrating progress towards results at all levels. Speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a delegation said UNICEF played a central role in the United Nations system in combating violence against children. Another delegation noted that UNICEF, as a member of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, should continue to support implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

151. It was noted that the protection mandate of UNICEF applied not only to development activities but also to its work in the humanitarian field. Referring to the first global evaluation of child protection in emergencies, a delegation said it would welcome information on plans to measure performance in humanitarian situations.

152. Delegations expressed support for UNICEF efforts to strengthen the linkage between humanitarian and development assistance and building resilience. Speakers supported the strong commitment of UNICEF to the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, emphasizing that this must be translated into concrete action across all humanitarian operations. In addition, greater efforts must be made to communicate the intent of the transformative agenda to national Governments. Another speaker said it was time to implement the tools and mechanisms developed by the Committee and member agencies.

153. A number of delegations said that the reporting on results could be improved. Clearer reporting on the existing strategic plan and the indicators in the development results framework was needed to better assess the organization's performance. The results analysis under each focus area could benefit from an analysis of the progress and challenges in relation to the respective situations for girls and boys.

154. The report should allow readers to follow developing trends within a cycle of the strategic plan and make comparisons between various cycles and between regions. There should be more information on how the reported achievements contributed to higher-level outcomes, and additional references to risk assessment and mitigation.

155. Speakers welcomed the efforts of UNICEF in strengthening results-based management, in promoting innovation and in increasing efficiency gains and cost-savings, for example through the virtual integrated system of information (VISION), which had enabled standardized results-based planning and reporting, thereby helping to improve transparency and accountability.

156. One speaker welcomed the emphasis on strong enterprise risk management and the work of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations as well as the evaluation function. A delegation said that the quality of evaluations needed to improve. Moreover, the number of evaluations submitted had decreased significantly in recent years despite the requirements of the 2008 evaluation policy. Another delegation

encouraged UNICEF to include more information on how evidence generated by evaluations had been used to inform programming policy and advocacy.

157. Other speakers commended UNICEF for its continued commitment to innovation and future-oriented policies, particularly the important step of joining the International Aid Transparency Initiative.

158. Speakers welcomed the growth in regular resources and encouraged all countries to increase support for core and thematic funds and reduce the trend of earmarking funds. One delegation welcomed the UNICEF policy of working with Governments, especially those of middle-income countries, to make more effective use of domestic resources to benefit children.

159. Delegations said that the savings from inter-agency activities and coherence in working with other agencies must be reinvested in programmes and other management initiatives. UNICEF should support the formulation of standard operating procedures for the "Delivering as one" initiative.

160. Delegations expressed appreciation for the dedication of UNICEF staff around the world, particularly in humanitarian crises. Speakers urged UNICEF to continue to support the many thousands of people, particularly children, affected by the Syrian crisis.

161. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/7 (see annex).

B. UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017

162. The President, also speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, and several delegations condemned the attacks that had taken place that day at the United Nations compound in Mogadishu, killing several United Nations staff members. He also paid tribute to the many UNICEF staff members who worked in dangerous situations around the world.

163. The Deputy Executive Director for Programmes made a statement before the report (E/ICEF/2013/16 and Add.1) was introduced by the Director for Policy and Strategy.

164. Delegations commended UNICEF for the inclusive, participatory and transparent process conducted over the past few months in developing the draft strategic plan.

165. Many delegations said they agreed with the overall focus on the most disadvantaged, excluded and vulnerable children. They also agreed with the objectives of advancing UNICEF partnerships, strengthening national capacities and fostering regional cooperation so that Member States could be self-reliant in advancing the rights of children.

166. Speakers said that the plan was important for the work of UNICEF in implementing the post-2015 agenda. It should be flexible enough so that country programmes would be linked to national development needs and priorities and respect the principle of national ownership. Speakers stressed the importance of capacity-building in the legislative and policy infrastructure. Also emphasized was the need for buy-in from stakeholders at the community level.

167. Almost all speakers stressed the importance of the link to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. UNICEF was urged to work with other United Nations agencies to create common indicators and a coherent harmonized language to measure progress in implementing the mandates of the review. The simultaneous preparation of the new strategic plans for the funds and programmes had provided an opportunity to clearly establish complementarities and synergies, such as that between UNICEF and UNFPA on such issues as early marriage and early pregnancy, female genital mutilation/cutting and violence against adolescents.

168. UNICEF was asked to actively engage in the delivering as one approach and to empower resident coordinators as representatives of the entire United Nations system at the country level. The projected UNICEF contribution of $40 million to the resident coordinator system was a good step in support of the principles of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. UNICEF should also be a champion of harmonization of business practices and the removal of bottlenecks. Steps were needed to address fragmentation in procurement.

169. One delegation suggested exercising caution about the use of terminology that had not been agreed at the intergovernmental level, for example "fragile State", and said it was important to clarify the different types and mandates of reference documents cited in the draft strategic plan.

170. A group of delegations said the plan must make a clear distinction between the two important tasks vested in UNICEF: its global role in advocacy, research and monitoring of the situation of children and its role as development and humanitarian actor at the country level. Another group said it was important to consider the centrality of the eradication of poverty as the overarching priority for the international community and the United Nations development system.

171. Strong support was expressed for the equity approach as a means to reach vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded children, but some speakers said it should not undermine the principle of non-discrimination. One group of delegations recommended that UNICEF explicitly define how the equity approach supported the human-rights based approach to programming, which should be more closely integrated into the work of UNICEF. It was noted that the plan should explain how countries would be supported in implementing the recommendations of the treaty bodies.

172. Speakers said that inequity was present in a broad range of countries and regions, and that innovation and partnerships could promote significant development efforts to support children, particularly in middle-income countries.

173. A number of delegations emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation, with some noting that it needed more "muscle" from the United Nations system.

174. Delegations commented on the balance among the various programmatic outcomes. For water, sanitation and hygiene, it was suggested that approaches take into account the challenges regarding sustainable water resources, waste water management and water quality. In regard to health, several speakers encouraged UNICEF to pay more attention to health systems and infrastructures in the context of the global campaign to ensure universal health coverage. Various speakers expressed appreciation for the focus on malaria and HIV/AIDS. They emphasized

the importance of child protection and education for the rights of the child and said that resources for the key stand-alone goals of health and education should not be diluted. UNICEF was also encouraged to sharpen its focus on education in the post-conflict humanitarian context.

175. Many delegations expressed support for the comprehensive incorporation of humanitarian efforts into the plan and the emphasis on resilience-building. UNICEF was asked to elaborate on how it intended to strengthen the link between humanitarian action and development, and to include an analysis of its role and value added as a humanitarian actor. There should be more and better evaluations of humanitarian work, with a clear focus on results for children and women and clear indicators for monitoring the implementation of the transformative agenda. Clarification was needed in regard to the role of UNICEF in implementation of the agenda and the resources required. The strategic plan should provide more information on the approach of UNICEF to risk and the risk management strategy, including cooperation with other United Nations agencies.

176. Several speakers stressed the importance of child protection as a core issue for UNICEF, requiring substantial resources. They said there were significant opportunities for UNICEF to be the lead agency in supporting multisectoral approaches to building child protection systems. Children with disabilities needed special attention.

177. In respect of the issue of gender equality, many delegations said gender equality needed to be more explicit in the strategic plan as well as in programme documents and the reporting of results. UNICEF efforts in gender mainstreaming and its active participation in piloting the United Nations system-wide action plan were welcome, but gender must be addressed more systematically and coherently in the strategic plan, which should include clear guidance on mainstreaming the empowerment of girls and women. The new gender action plan developed by UNICEF should be adequately funded and form an integral part of the new strategic plan rather than stand alone as a separate document.

178. The linkage of gender equality to other policy priorities such as health, education and nutrition needed to be explicit. UNICEF needed to focus not only on women, mothers and girls but also on the attitudes and engagement of boys, men and fathers, and on some of the challenges faced by boys.

179. Several speakers addressed the issue of adolescence, saying investments in early childhood survival should go hand-in-hand with the safe, healthy and emancipated development of adolescent boys and girls. The new plan provided an opportunity to ensure that their specific needs and challenges were better taken into account.

180. One delegation commended UNICEF for leveraging a growing diversity of partnerships with civil society groups, the private sector and international financial institutions. Another urged UNICEF to articulate more clearly the plans it had developed with partners relating to the initiatives, "Committing to child survival: a promise renewed" and "A world fit for children" and the integrated global action plan for the prevention and control of pneumonia and diarrhoea. UNICEF was requested to share its expertise in the area of partnerships with other United Nations agencies, particularly in the context of the resident coordinator system. A speaker welcomed the specific reference in the draft strategic plan to the supportive role of

the National Committees for UNICEF. It was also suggested that UNICEF include faith-based organizations in the sections on partnership.

181. Many delegations commented on the proposed results framework, saying that it should be strong and provide clear goals at output, outcome and impact levels. It should also have well-defined indicators, including qualitative indicators with baseline data and targets, so that UNICEF could clearly identify its contribution to the results. There was still room for improving the logic among the different levels of the results chains and for simplifying and improving goal formulations and indicators.

182. The plan lacked clear, specific, quantifiable output indicators that were clearly attributable to UNICEF and could be aggregated from country level to global level. Also needed were clear indicators of country programme performance against expected results, with defined baselines and targets. UNICEF was requested to provide indicators ensuring the availability of data disaggregated by gender and disability, where appropriate and possible.

183. It was crucial that the strategy and results framework should be easily understood by a broad audience, ranging from stakeholders at the field level to policymakers. There should be clearer indications on inter-agency cooperation in such areas as health and disaster risk response.

184. In the integrated budget for 2014-2017, UNICEF was encouraged by one delegation to split the budget line under the cluster "Independent corporate oversight and assurance" into two budget lines, one for the Evaluation Office and one for internal audit and investigations.

185. In preparing a final draft of the plan, UNICEF should show clear theories of change to demonstrate how outputs were directly attributable to UNICEF, how outputs and outcomes were linked and how risks were assessed and managed.

186. The Deputy Executive Director for Programmes discussed some of the initiatives UNICEF was taking to strengthen its work in gender equality, including measurement and reporting on progress. The Director for Policy and Practice elaborated on the simplification and improvement of reporting on outputs, outcomes and results, including through streamlining the indicators.

187. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/8 (see annex).

C. Harnessing knowledge to achieve results for children

188. Following preliminary remarks by the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, the Director of the Office of Research presented a report on harnessing knowledge to achieve results for children.

189. The Deputy Executive Director said that since 2012, UNICEF had focused attention on a new foundation for research and had taken steps in repositioning knowledge management, but much more needed to be done, especially to respond to the large demand from the field. The efforts described in the report were a collaborative effort between the Office of Research, the Division of Policy and Strategy, the Programme Division, the information technology team, the emergency and humanitarian team, and other divisions and offices.

190. The Director of the Office of Research described the progress made in building an evidence base, filling knowledge gaps and using data and research in advocacy for children. UNICEF needed to increase its capacity to use research data, improve quality assurance of research and continue to work on the ethics of research on children. Looking ahead, he said UNICEF wanted to accelerate that trajectory and develop a research agenda for children that could be a catalyst for bringing together and prioritizing the major issues concerning children.

191. One delegation welcomed the proposal for extended research on violence against children, and encouraged UNICEF to include research on psychosocial matters. The initiative for research on school-based interventions could strengthen the cross-sectoral approach of the UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017. The delegation stressed the relevance of the Fund's work to developing improved methods to collect data and statistics on children living with disabilities, and was pleased to see that the report highlighted the role of the National Committees in advocacy on children's rights. The delegation asked how cross-sectoral issues and implementation strategies in the new strategic plan, such as research and evidence generation, would be financed and how the ideas for future directions had been translated into a workplan and budget.

192. The Director thanked delegations for supporting the research efforts of UNICEF, particularly for the proposed areas of research, which had begun to map the gaps in those areas. He noted that much of the funding would come through the various results areas of the strategic plan, which would provide the framework for the workplan and budget.

D. Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

193. The report (E/ICEF/2013/12) was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director for Programmes and the Principal Adviser for Gender and Rights.

194. A group of 16 delegations welcomed the frankness of the analysis in the report, and said it clearly identified a number of challenges. There had been significant improvements in the collection and availability of sex-disaggregated data, although the annual report of the Executive Director and the draft UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017 insufficiently addressed gender equality.

195. The two UNICEF mechanisms for knowledge management on gender issues at the global level, a self-assessment survey of gender mainstreaming in UNICEF and a "community of practice" on gender, had been less effective than anticipated owing to lack of participation. The delegations asked what was being done to create a regular forum for exchange, learning and strategy planning regarding UNICEF gender priorities and programming, and if other, more practical mechanisms were being considered.

196. The delegations made four recommendations to improve the progress of UNICEF gender equality: (a) strengthen the draft strategic plan by including gender-sensitive performance information; (b) develop a strong and well-articulated strategic priority action plan, clearly linked to the draft strategic plan, costed and with adequate funds allocated for gender equality; (c) make performance information in the strategic priority action plan consistent with the gender-sensitive

results and sex-disaggregated indicators to be reflected in the draft strategic plan; and (d) clarify the linkage between gender equality and the equity approach.

197. Another delegation suggested that UNICEF summarize lessons learned to improve the design of the indicators by better reflecting the situation on the ground. In formulating the new strategic priority action plan, UNICEF should take into account countries' different situations and needs.

198. Another group of delegations noted that the inadequate capacities and resource allocations mentioned in the report needed to be addressed. Gender should be an institutional priority, and UNICEF needed a systemic strategy to support the sharing of good practices and gender-equitable programming. Organization-wide guidance, tools, processes and monitoring mechanisms must be better managed.

199. Delegations noted that targets for country gender reviews had been met, even in regions where they had previously lagged behind, but called for more results across countries and sectors. UNICEF would have to work towards closing the gaps in technical capacity at the country and regional levels. The focal point system should be strengthened and responsive strategies employed.

200. It was suggested that UNICEF continue to play an active role in inter-agency processes and initiatives to promote gender equality. Better screening procedures for engaging partners were needed to improve capacity and relevant expertise on gender issues. Subsequent reporting should include a clear definition and articulation of gender issues, equality and empowerment and mechanisms to help to determine whether programmes were effectively implementing gender strategies and achieving gender-equitable results.

201. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/9 (see annex).

E. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

1. Draft country programme and common country programme documents

202. The President announced that the Executive Board would have before it seven draft country programme documents and two draft common country programme documents, as well as the UNICEF results and resources frameworks for each draft common country programme documents. He also indicated that a document containing reasons for extensions of ongoing country programmes was presented to the Executive Board.

203. In accordance with its decision 2008/17, the Executive Board was informed of the reasons for deferment to the second regular session of 2013 of the presentation of the draft country programme documents of Mexico and Namibia, and of the draft subregional area programme document for the Gulf Area. The presentation of the draft country programme document for Kenya was deferred to the first regular session of 2014.

204. The Director of the Programme Division introduced the proposed country programmes and the extensions of ongoing country programmes presented for approval, noting that they demonstrated strategic engagement and commitment to narrowing the gaps to achieve outcomes for children, building a more equitable society and improving availability and access to basic social services for the most vulnerable children and families.

205. In accordance with decision 2013/4, the Board reviewed and approved, on an exceptional basis, the country programme document for Egypt (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.3) and the common country programme document for Rwanda (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-WFP/DCCP/2013/RWA/1 and Add.3).

206. The representative of Egypt said that the Girls' Education Initiative, the country's polio-free status and the national campaigns to eradicate female genital mutilation were examples of its solid cooperation with UNICEF. She stressed the importance of broadening the range of partnerships by mobilizing religious leaders, civil society, the media and the business sector, and by mainstreaming gender in all programme components.

207. The representative of Rwanda said all the programmes carried out through the delivering as one initiative had been tailored to the needs of the Rwandan people and were in line with national priorities. She acknowledged the support of UNICEF for vital programmes targeting children's well-being from early childhood through adolescence, in the areas of health and nutrition, education, protection and HIV prevention.

208. Delegations commended the leadership and ownership demonstrated by the Government of Rwanda in supporting the programme process, noting that the results framework was reasonably good, and that some indicators at the outcome level had been identified, although some gender equality aspects and the link between child protection and gender-based violence could be further clarified. They recommended that the country team review the recommendations from the country-led 2010 evaluation on gender equality.

209. Another delegation said that the UNICEF office in Rwanda, which coordinated with the Government and development partners, should continue to strengthen its collaboration with partners, particularly in education and water and sanitation. UNICEF should also strengthen its cooperation with non-governmental organizations to help build their capacities, they said.

West and Central Africa

210. The country programme documents for Benin, Congo, Niger, Nigeria and Togo (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.4, E/ICEF/2013/P/L.5, E/ICEF/2013/P/L.6, E/ICEF/2013/P/L.7 and E/ICEF/2013/P/L.8, respectively) were presented by the Acting Regional Director.

211. The representative of Niger said the country programme reflected national priorities. Despite a high fertility rate, progress had been made thanks to the Government's political will and international cooperation. He asked how UNICEF was working with partners to help countries improve the situation of young girls. The Acting Regional Director said that UNICEF worked with interested donors on the issue and consulted with the Government to determine the best model for the transition from primary to secondary school and for systematically delaying the age of marriage and the first pregnancy.

212. The representative of Nigeria said that UNICEF remained an important partner in the country's people-centred development. The country programme document, aligned with national development initiatives, showed that, while considerable progress had been made in certain aspects of development, challenges remained in

infant and child mortality, the transmission of wild polio virus and the considerable burden of HIV infection.

213. The representative of Benin said that the new country programme document, which drew on lessons learned from previous programmes and was aligned with the country's growth and poverty reduction strategy, highlighted the social and economic challenges facing the country, including significant inequities in nutrition and access to health care, education and social and welfare protection.

214. The representative of Togo said that UNICEF had contributed significantly to national development programmes for health, basic education and social protection. Thanks to support from partners like UNICEF, the Government had been able to allocate more funds to women's and children's health.

215. The representative of the Congo said that the Government had made significant progress in increasing access to basic social services. The new country programme document would enable the country to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals by protecting the rights of children, particularly the most vulnerable.

216. Some delegations noted that the draft country programme document for the Congo presented two proposals for improving education, and it was necessary to increase the number of educational institutions and teachers, building on efforts promoting a child-friendly environment.

Americas and the Caribbean

217. The Regional Director introduced the country programme document for Cuba (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.2).

218. The representative of Cuba said the country programme document was the result of a broad national participatory process, involving ministries, institutions and centres of learning. Cuba had achieved a number of Millennium Development Goals and was working on measures to improve the quality and sustainability of the achievements.

South Asia

219. The Regional Director introduced the draft common country programme document for Bhutan (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF/DCCP/2013/BTN/1 and Add.3).

220. The representative of Bhutan said that the delivering as one approach had increased the impact of the United Nations system in the country's development process. Bhutan's eleventh five-year plan, for 2014-2018, focused on self-reliance and inclusive "green" socioeconomic development, in an effort to tackle the multiple challenges of poverty, vulnerability to national disasters and climate change, urbanization, gender equality and youth employment. UNICEF had reflected those challenges and priorities in its outputs within the common country programme.

221. One delegation welcomed the fact that the common country programme document reflected the comparative strengths of the United Nations funds and programmes, with UNICEF directly supporting three of the four outcomes of the delivering as one programme, focusing on education, maternal and child health care, and the advancement of rights and protection of women and children. UNICEF

engagement in improving the living conditions of the many children living in monastic institutions merited strong support, they said, commending UNICEF support for gender equality and promotion of the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes.

2. Extension of ongoing country programmes

222. Speaking on behalf of the Regional Directors for the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa, the Director for Programmes informed the Executive Board of the six-month extension of the country programme of Kenya and of the one-year extension of the country programmes of Angola and the area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine.

223. The representative of Kenya said the extension would allow the programme to align with the country's budgeting cycle, which commences in June.

224. The representative of Angola noted the progress made in protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse.

225. The representative of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations expressed appreciation for the important assistance provided to Palestinian children and women by UNICEF in the areas of education, health care, maternal care, nutrition and psychosocial programmes. He noted that the extension of the area programme was crucial for the next year.

226. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic noted that the development of the new area programme would be postponed in her country in the light of the instability.

227. The representative of Israel expressed the objection of her Government to some of the terminology used by the secretariat in the introduction of the item.

228. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2013/10, 2013/11 and 2013/12 (see annex), and deferred consideration of the decision on extensions of ongoing country programmes to the second regular session of 2013.

F. Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations, and revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

229. The reports (E/ICEF/2013/13 and E/ICEF/2013/14) were introduced by the Director of the Evaluation Office.

230. A group of delegations said that the annual report was an excellent example of analytic evidence-based and forward-looking reporting that provided the Executive Board with a clear overview of the work of UNICEF, including useful observations on strength and weaknesses. The group welcomed the frank and self-critical analysis on issues, such as coverage, quality, demand and topical distribution of evaluations, including the particular challenges regarding evaluation in humanitarian contexts.

231. A second group said that the annual report indicated a healthy shift in how evaluation was used as a strategic tool to support organization-wide learning for improved performance and results. To further strengthen the evaluation function, the

group encouraged UNICEF to take further steps to sharpen evaluation tools and strategic usage of evaluation results.

232. Delegations asked what specific measures would be taken to address two of that report's main observations: the declining number of evaluations and the declining proportion of impact and summative evaluations.

233. Speakers suggested that the policy address how UNICEF would ensure both the adequate quantity and quality of evaluations and that it propose more evaluations of major humanitarian programmes. In implementing the policy, UNICEF should pay special attention to evaluation quality assurance, with a specific focus on policy improvement. With respect to the use of evaluations, the revised policy rightly emphasized the importance of follow-up actions and provided guidance on utilization, dissemination and disclosure.

234. Speakers welcomed the fact that the key mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review had been taken into account in the revised policy through the emphasis on the importance of United Nations system-wide evaluations, capacity-building for joint evaluations and the United Nations Evaluation Group's norms and standards for evaluation. Delegations welcomed the participation of UNICEF in such inter-agency mechanisms for evaluation, and encouraged further efforts in that regard. Referring to the mention of weaknesses in inter-agency evaluation leadership and governance arrangements across the United Nations, delegations said they would welcome discussions on joint evaluations by the Executive Board as a concrete step forward.

235. Delegations welcomed the focus on evaluation planning and the move towards greater independence for the evaluation function. The policy clearly stated its link to the UNICEF mandate and mission on child rights, but the explicit link between the evaluation policy and the strategic plan could be elaborated further. Speakers expressed support for the proposal to prepare a global evaluation plan linked to the new strategic plan. Some said the policy document could be more explicit in emphasizing the importance of planning for evaluation as something that should be done concurrently with planning in general. Overall evaluation planning could be strengthened.

236. A group of delegations highlighted the importance of paying attention to equity and gender equality and strengthening the capacities of the organization's evaluation partners.

237. Delegations said that adequate resources must be allocated to the evaluation function and supported the commitment to allocate a minimum of 1 per cent of programme expenses for evaluations. The resources for the evaluation function must be reflected transparently and independently of other functions in the integrated budget, with a separate budget line to ensure predictable and untied funding. It was equally important that evaluation expenses could be tracked by enterprise management systems. Regarding the funding of decentralized evaluations, UNICEF should consider including evaluation expenses in programme budgets during the planning stage. UNICEF should direct scarce evaluation resources where they were most needed for programme learning and decision-making.

238. In terms of guiding principles, delegations encouraged UNICEF to make clear that it followed the human rights-based approach to development and include an explicit reference to the United Nations Evaluation Group's guidelines on the

integration of human rights and gender equality in evaluation. A speaker said that evaluations should be conducted in full accordance with the UNICEF mandate, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of national accountability for development. Another said that the leading principle in conducting evaluations should be the availability of verifiable factual data for making balanced decisions on policy measures and programmes.

239. Delegations requested information on how the evaluation function was linked to the knowledge management function to strengthen UNICEF as a genuine evidence-based organization for more effective programming and advocacy. It was suggested that the policy would benefit from more specific information on whether and how evaluation would interact with regional and/or country offices and provide them with evaluation support, capacity-building, training and guidance.

240. Speakers raised the issue of the responsibility of senior management to present a management response to the annual report of the Evaluation Office, saying it would ensure a coherent and organization-wide follow-up to the evaluation policy.

241. Regarding the proposal to develop a strategic plan to complement the evaluation policy, delegations said such a document should contain only the details of implementation guidance. and that all key policy issues must be included in the evaluation policy itself.

242. It was suggested that the policy stipulate the inclusion of thematic global evaluation as an item on the agenda of the Executive Board.

243. A group of delegations said that more consultations on the development of the revised policy could have taken place with the Executive Board.

244. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/13 (see annex).

G. Thematic synthesis report on evaluation of humanitarian action

245. The report (E/ICEF/2013/15) was presented by the Director of the Evaluation Office. In accordance with decision 2011/20, a succinct management response was also prepared for information and posted on the UNICEF website; it was presented by the Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes. He noted that evaluation now formed an explicit element of the emergency response planning of UNICEF. Gaps and challenges were being addressed in the strategic plan for 2014-2017 and by inter-agency work on the transformative agenda.

246. A group of delegations commended UNICEF for the useful, well-written and self-critical report. They expressed support for the closer linkages between humanitarian assistance and development activities. They welcomed the incorporation of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and humanitarian-related results in the strategic plan, while recommending improvements in the current draft results framework, emphasizing resilience. Among the suggestions were the need for increased cross-sectoral action, needs assessments, communication and cooperation with affected groups, and capacity to assess and manage risks. More attention needed to be paid to strengthening accountability in, and performance of, the cluster system. The number, scope and quality of evaluations needed to be increased and more joint evaluations undertaken. The latter view was echoed by several other delegations.

247. The representative of Haiti commended UNICEF for its response to the 2010 earthquake in that country. UNICEF was one of the first agencies on the ground and provided critical support with few resources. UNICEF should be applauded for becoming more risk-aware and for rapidly deploying staff. Among the lessons learned was the necessity to keep the needs of vulnerable children at the heart of the response; to reinforce the involvement of the national Government; and to think outside the box.

248. Several other delegations also commended UNICEF for its humanitarian work, while recommending a stronger focus on results, based on clear objectives. One delegation emphasized the need for a stronger focus on equity. UNICEF was praised for strengthening its evaluation of humanitarian action, which had yielded important knowledge and lessons that should inform policy and operations at headquarters and in the field, and should be shared with partners. Evaluation needed to be more decentralized and focus more on lower-level emergencies. It was essential that institutional capacity in this area be solidified at all levels, for both UNICEF and its Government partners, and adequate resources allocated.

249. The Director for Evaluation said he appreciated the emphasis on improving reporting on results and capacity-building at all levels, for UNICEF and its partners. The Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes agreed, emphasizing that UNICEF would seek to strengthen its humanitarian monitoring and focus on outputs. Noting the importance of decentralization, he pointed out that the evaluation work had in fact been done at country and regional levels. He emphasized that all recommendations in the report, and delegations' comments, would continue to be addressed in 2013 and beyond.

H. Report of the Ethics Office

250. The annual report on the activities of the Ethics Office was submitted in accordance with decision 2010/18. The report (E/ICEF/2013/17) was introduced by the Principal Adviser for Ethics. Looking ahead, UNICEF was proposing a new key performance indicator on ethics to be included in the strategic plan. The indicator would focus on strengthening ethical organizational culture and supporting a climate in which staff members feel that it is safe and useful to speak up. The roll-out of the indicator would be supported through the training of leaders and managers.

251. There were no comments on the report.

I. Office of Internal Audit and Investigations: 2012 annual report to the Executive Board

252. The report (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.2) was presented by the Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations. The management response (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.3) was presented by the Deputy Executive Director for Management. The annual report of the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee for 2012 is available from www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/UNICEF_AAC_Annual_Report_for_2012-3May2013.pdf.

253. Speakers commended the Office for the informative and transparent annual report and UNICEF for the overall swift implementation of the recommendations.

They encouraged UNICEF to continue to closely monitor the Office's resources so that the Office could successfully carry out its functions.

254. Delegations commended the Office for the implementation of Executive Board decision 2012/13 on public disclosure of internal audit reports in 2012. A group of delegations requested additional information, for example, on the findings and recommendations raised by the Office across years. This would allow Member States to better track priority issues, identify key areas for improvement on the systemic management risks faced by the organization and encourage increased accountability. Information was also requested on the completion rate of planned audits.

255. Referring to a 2011 report by UNDP on disciplinary measures taken in response to fraud, corruption and other wrongdoing in that year, a speaker asked if UNICEF could produce a similar report.

256. Delegations expressed concern that 8 of 18 high-priority recommendations were related to implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers and the use of funds by seven country offices. Those indications of shortcomings were also cited in the external auditors' report of the United Nations Board of Auditors. Speakers welcomed the current review of the approach.

257. Speakers requested UNICEF urgently to address all recommendations to strengthen controls in the five country offices with significant high-risk recommendations. They were particularly concerned about the weaknesses in administrative and operational support, which could open the door to irregularities and malfeasance. They encouraged timely implementation of recommendations related to project management and administrative support issues.

258. Delegations expressed concern about the six high-priority recommendations concerning administration of separation benefits and entitlements, a process considered routine, especially with regard to the costing of termination indemnities and justification of mutually agreed termination. Owing to the potentially high costs, the Office was asked to verify by end 2013 whether all recommendations had been followed up.

259. Delegations asked for information about the follow-up of the five high-priority recommendations regarding the joint audit of "Delivering as one", led by UNDP. UNICEF was asked for information on how it would follow up with managers who perceived risk management as a stand-alone compliance exercise, rather than an approach to be fully embedded into processes and procedures.

260. They also asked about the 10 recommendations outstanding for more than 18 months and about whether the Office found the reasons cited for the delay satisfactory.

261. The Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations responded to each of the questions, including by providing explanations of continuous improvements made by the Office in its reporting, the current practice of tracking implementation of the approved workplan and the priority of producing a 2013 summary report on cash transfers in country offices. The Deputy Executive Director echoed her statements, adding that UNICEF was the co-chair of the inter-agency advisory committee on the harmonized approach to cash transfers and was involved in revising its framework. He further explained how most of the long-outstanding

recommendations noted in the Office's 2012 annual report had already been addressed, and highlighted actions being taken on other high-risk areas.

262. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/14 (see annex).

J. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

263. The item was deferred to the second regular session of 2013.

K. Reports of Executive Board field visits

1. Report of the field visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia by members of the Bureau of the Executive Board of UNICEF, 15 to 20 April 2013

264. The report was introduced by Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations and President of the Executive Board. He said the visit highlighted the engagement of UNICEF in these middle-income countries. The region had been engulfed in civil strife and the members of the Bureau saw the role of UNICEF in this post-conflict situation and reconstruction phase.

265. The visit allowed Bureau members to gain first-hand understanding of the work of UNICEF at the country level and to observe concrete examples of UNICEF cooperation with the Government and other partners, including the United Nations country team. They saw UNICEF engagement in early childhood development, social protection, inclusion, and child protection, health and education. The visit had shown clearly that UNICEF, with a universal mandate, had an important role to play in the middle-income countries.

2. Report of the field visit of members of the UNICEF Executive Board to Malawi, 8 to 12 April 2013

266. The report was introduced by Edel Dwyer, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations. She said that Malawi was on track to meet Millennium Development Goals 4 and 7, but progress was lagging in many areas, including reducing poverty, improving primary-school completion rates and reducing infant and maternal mortality and child malnutrition. Those challenges must be addressed using a collaborative approach and a long-term perspective.

267. Although access to funding could be a serious constraint, a more important challenge was the lack of capacity to implement strategies and systemic inefficiencies at central, district and local levels. Strengthening capacity, addressing systemic weaknesses and providing accountability would be essential to affect progress in the long term. The Government must continue to play a leadership role in national development policy. National ownership and responsibility were essential drivers for the achievement of results and for long-term, sustainable growth and development.

3. Report of the joint field visit to Bangkok and Myanmar, 6 to 19 March 2013

268. The report of the joint visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP to Bangkok and Myanmar was introduced by Chris Stokes, Development Adviser to the Permanent Mission of

Australia to the United Nations. He said the relationship between the United Nations and the Government of Myanmar was evolving rapidly. The activities of the United Nations appeared to be well aligned with government priorities. Instead of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the United Nations country team used a strategic framework for 2012-2015 which was developed before many of the current national reforms were under way and did not have buy-in from the Government. The changing context offered the country team an opportunity to work towards greater coherence across agencies.

269. The report was structured around four themes: inclusive growth and poverty reduction; equitable access to quality social services; disaster risk reduction and climate change; and good governance and strengthened democratic and human rights institutions. The report also addressed gender equality and women's empowerment, humanitarian operations and support to peacebuilding. The United Nations country team in Myanmar was highly committed to building an increasingly positive dialogue with the Government at all levels.

4. Discussion

270. The representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Malawi and Myanmar expressed appreciation to the members of the field visit teams for drawing attention to the challenges they faced in their different countries. Two speakers who had participated in the joint field visit said the experience had been extremely valuable, especially the opportunity to speak to beneficiaries of the country programmes.

L. Other matters

271. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced the provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of the Executive Board for 2013, scheduled to take place from 3 to 6 September.

M. Adoption of draft decisions

272. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2013/7 to 2013/14 (see annex). Consideration of the draft decision on the extension of ongoing country programmes was deferred.

N. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President of the Executive Board

273. The Executive Director expressed appreciation for the rich discussion about the strategic plan. Recommendations for improvement aligned with the priorities of UNICEF on how to mainstream protection and gender and how to improve both the quality and quantity of evaluations, among other issues.

274. He emphasized that it was sad that political questions had arisen during the session. This was a cause for regret and also for alarm, since the Executive Board, like UNICEF, must remain non-political for the sake of its mandate and for the rights of the children.

275. The President said that a spirit of openness and constructive dialogue must prevail at all sessions and that the Executive Board must keep the best interests of the child as its main concern. The Executive Board had made great progress towards finalization of the strategic plan. He trusted that the Executive Director and his team would present a robust document, accompanied by an equally sound integrated budget, for approval at the second regular session of 2013.

Part three
Second regular session of 2013

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 6 September 2013

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening statements

276. The President welcomed the consultative and inclusive approach that had gone into the development of the UNICEF strategic plan and integrated budget, 2014-2017, both of which would be considered for approval at the present session. This comprehensive approach had been enhanced through the harmonization of the budgeting process with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women. The next phase would encompass the challenging task of implementation.

277. Highlighting the importance of finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis, he praised the staff members of UNICEF who were working to help Syrian girls and boys affected by conflict.

278. He expressed his appreciation for the holding of a special focus session on the work of UNICEF for children with disabilities. It was imperative to realize the rights of these children in all aspects of their lives. *The State of the World's Children* report for 2013, on children with disabilities, had emphasized that no children should be defined by disability; rather, they should be treated as unique individuals with their own voice and contributions to make to society. Recognizing this would require a profound change in practices and attitudes, including those involving gender, as well as laws and policies.

279. In his opening statement, the Executive Director noted that the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries required urgent attention. He described several key activities undertaken by UNICEF and its partners to alleviate the crisis, with generous support from donors. He emphasized that the organization would stay and deliver results for children to the extent possible but that more funds were needed. Paying tribute to staff members working there and in other situations of crisis around the world, he asked delegations to take a moment to honour their dedication and bravery. The staff received a round of applause.

280. The Executive Director turned his attention to the post-2015 agenda, explaining that UNICEF was committed to placing children and equity at its heart. The international community had a duty to realize the rights of children — especially the most vulnerable — to health, education, protection and participation. It was essential to break through the barriers and bottlenecks to achieve equity-based targets. This could be done by increasing the capacity of the most disadvantaged people and families to take advantage of goods and services, thereby increasing both demand and supply. It was also imperative that structural impediments to this goal be overcome by fostering a supportive environment that would enable the poor to have access to and use essential services. This environment included laws and regulations, resources and efforts to end discrimination and exclusion.

281. UNICEF was pursuing practical means to help to build an effective and sustainable post-2015 agenda. The organization had established a post-2015 team, which was working successfully to place children's issues at the centre of discussions, including those taking place in the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The organization would also support this agenda through its new strategic plan and integrated budget, both spanning the period form 2014 to

2017, and was engaged in a "UNICEF 3.0" discussion on the future as well as in the efficiency and effectiveness improvement initiative.

B. Adoption of the agenda

282. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session (E/ICEF/2013/19).

283. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex to the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 21 observer delegations, including 2 intergovernmental organizations, 1 non-governmental organization and 6 National Committees for UNICEF.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2014 (agenda item 3)

284. The proposed programme of work for the Executive Board sessions in 2014 (E/ICEF/2013/20) was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

285. The President reminded those present that the programme of work for 2014 should be guided by the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

286. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/15 (see annex).

B. UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017: realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged (agenda item 4)

287. The Executive Board had before it the draft UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017, and supporting documents containing the key performance indicators and results framework (E/ICEF/2013/21 and Add.1). A supplementary document on the "theory of change" had been posted to the UNICEF website. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, introduced the documents, which were presented by the Director, Policy and Strategy. He summarized the key improvements made to the plan since a draft had been presented to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2013. The improvements represented a response to the valuable comments received from the Executive Board members and others.

288. All delegations who made interventions expressed their enthusiastic support for the strategic plan. Many praised it for its focus on equity, including with regard to vulnerable and marginalized children, on realizing the rights of children, especially those with disabilities, and on gender equality. Also praised were several aspects of the plan: its close matching of resources to priorities, synergy across outcomes, ambitious goals, attention to follow-up of the recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review harmonized with that of other United Nations agencies, the bridging of humanitarian action and development, and emphasis on results-based management.

289. The open, transparent and inclusive consultative process behind the plan was widely praised. It was recommended that UNICEF closely involve the Executive Board in strategies and plans for implementation in the future.

290. The strategic plan, along with the integrated budget of UNICEF, would be a key contribution of UNICEF to implementing the post-2015 agenda and to closing the remaining gaps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and would have far-reaching impact in this regard. One delegation said that one of the plan's most significant characteristics was its clearly articulated description of changes to the global development environment, which provided the context for the plan. Another said that the plan fit perfectly with the emerging outlines of a new, sustainable development agenda, the highest priority of which would be to end poverty and reduce inequality, "leaving no person behind". Appreciation was expressed for the way UNICEF would address crucial issues in the coming years, such as quality education, the empowerment of girls and women and child protection. In addition to children with disabilities, it was recommended by one delegation that UNICEF include combating human trafficking, especially of children, as a strong component of the UNICEF protection agenda.

291. Strong support was voiced for the human rights-based approach. One group of delegations recommended that accountability, participation, transparency and non-discrimination be the principles of the operational work of UNICEF. The group also commented that a main responsibility of UNICEF was to help Governments to implement the recommendations of treaty bodies.

292. UNICEF was encouraged to further refine the strategic plan's indicators in the results framework. For example, it was recommended that the indicators measure social inequalities and differentiate among vulnerable groups, including indigenous groups.

293. Some delegations recommended that the results indicators of the strategic plan and the forthcoming Gender Equality Action Plan, 2014-2017, provide strong guidance on how gender equality perspectives would be strengthened in operational activities. It was emphasized that the use of sex-disaggregated data was extremely important, as was a focus on gender equality in armed conflict.

294. One group of delegations encouraged UNICEF to present a finalized document on the theory of change to the Executive Board, preferably at its first regular session of 2014, and to make the document a formal annex to the strategic plan. It was suggested, in particular, that this theory clarify how UNICEF works with its various partners and assess the risks of not achieving results, while showing how the risks could be mitigated.

295. UNICEF was encouraged by several delegations to increase its capacity for risk management in the field and to maintain its enterprise risk management system. In this regard, support was expressed for the priorities of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, noted in the plan, and the strengthening of evaluation. UNICEF was asked how it would further improve the system-wide risk management system.

296. UNICEF was praised by a number of delegations for its support of United Nations development coordination, including coherence. Some acknowledged the organization's active participation in the United Nations Development Group and encouraged more support of "Delivering as one" and "One United Nations". One

delegation cautioned that this collaborative work should aim to streamline procedures and the use of donor funds and should not water down the mandates of the individual agencies, which would lead to a loss of comparative advantage.

297. Partnership was a major theme of the comments. It was noted that collaboration with a wide range of partners should remain a priority in the work of UNICEF. This should include South-South and triangular cooperation, acknowledged in the strategic plan. Another important aspect of partnership was private sector fundraising. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its innovative approach in this area, which had helped to increase the income of the organization. Particularly welcomed was the successful private sector fundraising for regular resources.

298. UNICEF was praised for emphasizing monitoring and evidence, bolstering evidence-based evaluation and promoting the Monitoring Results for Equity System in its work and that of its partners. One group of delegations recommended that UNICEF strengthen the real-time monitoring systems of Governments and partners through the System, focusing particularly on barriers and bottlenecks faced by the most disadvantaged children and families. It was important, delegations said, to use and strengthen national data collection systems for reporting on progress in implementing the strategic plan.

299. Several delegations emphasized the importance of innovation, echoing the views expressed by the Executive Director. It was noted that innovation using information and communication technologies could enhance efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. UNICEF was encouraged to look for more opportunities to incorporate innovation in its work and to support the exchange of best practices.

300. One delegation said that the approach of UNICEF to maintaining its level of physical presence in programme countries could set an example for other operational funds, programmes and entities in the United Nations system. It would be important to share the positive experience of UNICEF in this area.

301. UNICEF was encouraged to strengthen its support to least developed countries and middle-income countries, emphasizing the principle of national ownership. Several delegations stressed the importance of providing technical guidance to these countries and of supporting the capacity of programme countries and middle-income countries to meet development goals and achieve results. While UNICEF has shifted its support to middle-income countries to supporting disparity reduction, strengthening national partnerships and building technical capacity, in many such countries efforts must still aim to end poverty, educate children, empower girls, women and youth and provide health services for all.

302. On humanitarian action, UNICEF was encouraged to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and development results wherever possible and to bolster resilience.

303. In response to the comments, the Director, Policy and Strategy, promised an ongoing dialogue with the Executive Board and other stakeholders regarding implementation of the strategic plan. This would include reporting on mechanisms, partnership, the work on disability and the forthcoming Gender Equality Action Plan. He said that UNICEF recognized the importance of data on vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded groups, including disaggregated data, and these data

were already being gathered. He noted that the plans of UNICEF for reporting on the implementation of recommendations in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, including by not providing a separate report on quadrennial comprehensive policy review implementation, was part of the UNICEF efficiency and effectiveness effort, which will save considerable resources. Emphasizing the growing support of UNICEF for South-South and triangular cooperation, he pointed out that the strategic plan included a specific indicator on this issue beyond the 10 common indicators. Learning between and among countries was a way of the future.

304. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that UNICEF would work with the Executive Board on operationalizing the strategic plan, particularly on monitoring progress on the results-based management component, which was new to this plan. Emphasizing that promoting gender equality was a top priority of UNICEF, she said that the Gender Equality Action Plan would focus on results and programmatic action in the field related to the seven outcome areas of the strategic plan. There would be an organization-wide consultation on gender to be held early in November 2013 in Bangkok.

305. The Executive Director praised the staff of UNICEF and the Executive Board members for all the hard work that went into developing the strategic plan. He assured Board members that operationalization would be consistent with the recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

306. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/16 (see annex).

C. Programme cooperation (agenda item 5)

1. Approval of revised country and common country programme documents discussed at the annual session of 2013 (agenda item 5 (a))

307. In accordance with Executive Board decisions 2002/4, 2006/19 and 2008/17, the Executive Board approved, on a no-objection basis, the revised country programme documents for Benin, Congo, Cuba, Niger, Nigeria and Togo, as well as the UNICEF-specific results and resources framework for the common country programme document for Bhutan.

2. Draft country and area programme documents and regional summaries of midterm reviews of country programmes (agenda items 5 (b) and 5 (d))

308. Following an introduction by the Director of Programmes, three draft country programme and area programme documents were presented by region, together with the regional summaries of midterm reviews of country programmes.

Middle East and North Africa

309. The Director of Programmes provided an overview of the Gulf Area subregional programme (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.17) and the regional summary of midterm reviews (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.13), covering the country programmes of Iraq and Lebanon.

310. The representative of Qatar welcomed the proposed programme, as it underlined the key results and lessons learned from the partnerships between UNICEF and the Gulf Area. She highlighted the work of some of the national

institutions, such as the Qatar Foundation and Qatar Charity, established to address the challenges of the twenty-first century.

311. The representative of Lebanon thanked UNICEF for supporting her country's efforts to rebuild its institutions and achieve development and peace and stability. She noted that much remained to be done to reduce the gap between the goals and aspirations and the challenges faced, particularly the continuous increase in the number of Syrian and Palestinian refugees crossing into Lebanon, which represented a heavy burden for her country. She said the Government looked forward to continuing to work with UNICEF and all partners to advance the priorities of her country despite the regional turbulence.

312. Several delegations commented on the midterm review of the country programme of Iraq, welcoming the results achieved and the growing importance of UNICEF in the light of the fact that many cooperation partners were phasing out their engagement there. While supporting the proposed focus of integrating conflict prevention and management, along with an increased field presence on the part of UNICEF, some delegations said that they had expected a more elaborate analysis of UNICEF capacity and working methods, the challenges linked to implementation and the delivery of expected results, and resource mobilization. UNICEF was encouraged to follow up on the normative work in Iraq, including reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

313. In response, the Director acknowledged the extent of the refugee crisis in Lebanon, noting that it risked reversing the gains achieved for children there, particularly for refugee children and their families. He also noted that the rising levels of violence in Iraq had a direct impact on access and, consequently, the type of programming that UNICEF and other development partners could undertake there.

Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

314. The Regional Director provided an overview of the midterm reviews for the region (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.11), covering the country programmes of Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

315. The representative of Armenia noted that his country was on track to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals, despite the effects of the global economic crisis. His Government, he said, recognized that many challenges remained, including with regard to the expansion of community-based services for families to prevent the institutionalization of children, as well as the integration of social services, the strengthening of maternal health and the improvement of inclusive education. The Government welcomed UNICEF assistance in drafting many of the social policies linked to child protection, juvenile justice and inclusive education.

316. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina said that institutions at all levels had developed partnerships with UNICEF to strengthen education, health, social welfare, justice reform and child protection. However, despite significant achievements in realizing children's rights, more cooperation was needed to meet standards in social inclusion and gender equality. The economic crisis and governance issues had slowed the momentum of reforms, she said, and had negatively affected the social inclusion of the most vulnerable in the country. In

particular, this had affected the protection of children from abuse and violence and the registration of newborn children.

317. The representative of the Russian Federation stated that her Government supported measures to improve the childcare system in the region, particularly for children with disabilities, rural children and those from disadvantaged urban communities and migrant families, as well as marginalized and stigmatized adolescents. It was useful to carry out country assessments to obtain data in order to develop strategies in development assistance in the region, especially as the countries remained vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters.

318. In response, the Regional Director acknowledged the continued efforts of Armenia to protect children though its budget allocations despite the difficulties remaining from the economic crisis. She said that UNICEF stood ready to facilitate the sharing of experiences with countries in the region and other parts of the world that were facing similar challenges. UNICEF was encouraged by the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote birth registration.

Eastern and Southern Africa

319. The Acting Regional Director provided an overview of the draft country programme document for Namibia (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.16) and the regional summary of midterm reviews for the region (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.12), covering the country programmes of Botswana and Burundi. He also made a brief presentation on the most recent situation of polio outbreaks in the region.

320. The representative of Namibia said that the draft country programme document was integral to the broader partnership with the United Nations country team. He cited the remarkable outcomes achieved with UNICEF support in health, education and child protection, although nutrition remained a challenge because of the country's vulnerability to drought. He noted that, with UNICEF support, his Government had extended the child welfare programme to all poor and vulnerable children. Despite the progress made, Namibia still faced capacity constraints, skills shortage in many sectors and huge inequalities in incomes and social outcomes, along with continued vulnerability to natural disasters.

321. One delegation noted that the bilateral cooperation between his country and Namibia had been successfully established in HIV/AIDS projects and could be expanded to other areas in health and education. Also supported through the cooperation were maternal health services and a nutrition project. His country supported the draft country programme document, especially as it demonstrated a further strengthening of both multilateral and bilateral cooperation.

322. The representative of Burundi expressed his country's gratitude for the support given by UNICEF and the international community. He highlighted poverty as the major challenge as the country emerged from the post-conflict situation. The Government, he said, had made considerable efforts to support children, as reflected in health care for children under five, free primary education and maternal health care services. He urged the international community to continue its support for Burundi.

323. The representative of Botswana said that children's rights remained a top priority for the Government, with health and education constituting a large part of the national budget. The partnership with UNICEF had supported the response to

HIV and AIDS and had helped to develop key policies and strategies in nutrition, malaria eradication and the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. He stressed his country's need for continued assistance, as challenges remained, notably in improving the quality of education, especially for children with disabilities and out-of-school children. He said that particular emphasis should be placed on the implementation of the Children's Act (to promote and protect children's rights) and of the 2010-2016 national plan of action for orphans and vulnerable children.

324. In response, the Regional Director acknowledged the supportive comments from delegations and noted the important collaboration that existed in Namibia between the Government, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and UNICEF.

Latin America and the Caribbean

325. The Regional Director provided an overview of the draft country programme document for Mexico (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.15) and the regional summary of midterm reviews (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.10), covering the country programmes of Argentina, Ecuador and Guatemala.

326. The representative of Mexico welcomed the cooperation with UNICEF, highlighting the joint efforts to reduce disparities, which particularly affected vulnerable groups in the middle-income country. Unequal development had led to disparities in access to health services, she said, with maternal mortality declining significantly in urban areas but not in rural areas. Mexico was on the verge of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with efforts continuing to improve maternal health. She said that the Government wanted to develop strategic guidelines on cooperation with UNICEF and on engagement in South-South cooperation so that other countries could benefit from her country's development efforts.

327. The representative of Guatemala noted that the visit of the Executive Director to the country had allowed him to see the Government's efforts to implement programmes for children and youth. Guatemala, she said, had a very young population, half of which was under the age of 18 and a quarter under the age of 6. The country also had one of the largest indigenous populations, which disproportionately suffered disadvantages that the Government was determined to combat. The country did not make sufficient progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals because of its vulnerability to natural disasters. Guatemala was grateful, she said, for the humanitarian assistance that UNICEF provided in collaboration with the United Nations system.

328. In response, the Regional Director welcomed the valuable comments by delegations and expressed confidence that the close collaboration with the Governments and partners in the region would continue to grow.

West and Central Africa

329. The Regional Director provided an overview of the regional summary of midterm reviews (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.14), covering the country programme of Côte d'Ivoire.

3. Extensions of ongoing country programmes (item 5 (c))

330. Document E/ICEF/2013/P/L.18 contained requests for the following extensions: the second consecutive one-year extensions of the country programmes for Guinea-Bissau and Mali; the one-year extension following the two-year extension for Paraguay; the third consecutive one-year extensions of the country programmes for Madagascar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia; and the extension for 2 ½ years of the country programme for South Sudan.

331. Following the discussion of agenda items 5 (b) and 5 (d), the Executive Board adopted decision 2013/17. The Executive Board also adopted decision 2013/18, on the country programme document for Kenya, and decision 2013/19, on the extensions of ongoing country programmes (see annex).

D. UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017 (item 6)

332. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, the Comptroller presented the integrated budget and its annex (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L/4 and Add.1). The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the UNICEF integrated budget for 2014-2017 (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.6) was also available for information.

333. The Comptroller said that the integrated budget was closely linked to the UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017. It identified for the first time how total resources would be allocated to programme outcomes and organizational effectiveness and efficiency results. This would be done according to cost categories approved by the Executive Board and harmonized across UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women.

334. Delegations welcomed the integrated budget and its strong link to the strategic plan, with its focus on equity. The resourcing elaborated in the integrated budget was a means to realize the ambitious outcomes set out in the strategic plan. Political will combined with mobilized financial investments would lead to dramatic improvement in the lives of poor and marginalized people, especially children. The fact that the integrated budget is user-friendly, clearly linking resources to the seven outcomes, would help to ensure that each dollar goes as far as possible in delivering planned outcomes. It would also enhance transparency and effectiveness. Several delegations said that UNICEF could further strengthen the budget as an instrument to support the implementation of the priorities of the strategic plan. To this end, it was suggested that the midterm review of the integrated budget look into which challenges remained to achieving results-based budgeting and whether the cost-recovery methodology met the expectation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for full cost recovery.

335. Some delegations commented that the harmonized presentation of the integrated budgets of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women was an opportunity to see how far the joint budget reform process had come and how far it could go in the future.

336. UNICEF was commended for the projected increase in contributions to regular (core) resources, which would stem the downward trend seen in previous years. This increase, coming at a time of global economic difficulty, was a testament to the faith placed in UNICEF by its partners and donors. Special thanks were given to the

National Committees for UNICEF and country offices, particularly in East Asia and Latin America, for their tremendous efforts in mobilizing resources from private donors.

337. In comments on both the integrated budget and the strategic plan, solid support was expressed for allocating more resources for programme expenditure and for the increase in the minimum regular resource allocation to country programmes, from $750 million to $850 million. Some delegations asked about the rationale for the latter proposal.

338. Delegations welcomed the projected decrease of 5 per cent in management costs and other institutional costs. One speaker commented that it demonstrated the financial discipline exercised by UNICEF despite the challenging economic times. Several other delegations requested more information on the reasons for the decrease and whether they stemmed from savings resulting from reform of the United Nations development system. In addition, the delegations recommended that UNICEF further reduce management costs, including those related to travel.

339. UNICEF was commended for implementing results-based budgeting and was encouraged to continue its excellent work in refining performance indicators along with measures of outcomes achieved.

340. While endorsing the proposal to increase the proportion of total resources utilized for development activities, one regional group requested that UNICEF exponentially increase these resources in order to meet the development challenges that affect children. Also welcomed was the proposal to increase resources for child protection and social inclusion. This was in line with the commitment of UNICEF to focus more intently on addressing the rights of children, particularly those with disabilities. At the same time, a question was raised about an apparent decrease in resources for HIV/AIDS.

341. Delegations commented that it was important that the organization pay due attention to identifying and managing risks to programme implementation at the earliest opportunity. UNICEF should provide resources to bolster institutional and national capacities to enhance risk-informed decision-making and to undertake evaluations. One group of delegations expressed appreciation for the increased allocation to the Evaluation Office. The same group asked for clarification on the resources allocated to audit and investigations functions.

342. UNICEF was also asked about: (a) the annual breakdown of the integrated resource plan; (b) whether it would maintain the 7 per cent of regular resources set aside; (c) when it would share the outcome of the efficiency and effectiveness exercise with the Executive Board, including budgetary implications; (d) how it would fund humanitarian action, including how it would separate humanitarian and development expenses; and (e) how it would maintain its important normative role in data collection analysis and research on the situation of children. UNICEF was asked to elaborate on the proposed allocation of resources to its global and regional programme.

343. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, thanked delegations for their appreciative comments, particularly those on the consultative process leading up to the integrated budget.

344. Responding to a concern raised about the increase in the allocation of resources for management, he said that UNICEF had carried out a comprehensive review across the organization of the resources required under the new cost categories. Through a more accurate attribution of costs to results areas, the organization had increased the share of management costs funded from cost recovery and reduced the share from regular/core resources. This freed up resources for country programmes. He confirmed that a midterm review of the integrated budget would be conducted in line with the midterm review for the strategic plan. UNICEF would look into further reducing management costs, including travel costs, which had already been reduced each year since 2011.

345. He noted that UNICEF was continuing the practice of setting aside 7 per cent of core resources available to address urgent situations or new opportunities.

346. Addressing the question raised on costs allocated to the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, he noted that UNICEF had increased the number of investigators, from four to five, while maintaining the same number of auditors. The organization was meeting the standards for regularity of audits, which were based on risk assessment. Thanks to the VISION resource management platform, more audit functions could be carried out from headquarters, thereby improving efficiency and saving costs.

347. On the importance of identifying risks in programme implementation, he said that UNICEF had fully applied an enterprise risk management strategy and had hired a full-time risk management officer. Every country office had performed a risk assessment and was reviewing risks at least once during the country programme cycle.

348. He said that the proposals emanating from the efficiency and effectiveness improvement initiative, once approved and finalized, would be shared with the Bureau and the Executive Board for information.

349. Noting that this efficiency and effectiveness exercise was ongoing, the Comptroller said that UNICEF would continuously report on efficiencies and savings achieved in the annual report of the Executive Director.

350. He addressed the question on the rationale for increasing the minimum regular resource allocation to country offices from $750 million to $850 million. He explained that in its decision 2012/15 the Executive Board had approved a minimum level of $750 million for country programmes according to the formula assessing high mortality rates for children under 5 years of age and low-income and large child populations. The increase to $850 million would compensate for certain additional costs (such as after-service health insurance) that country offices would now take on as a result of cost recovery and the attribution of costs to sources/results at the country level. Previously, a number of these costs had been covered by the institutional budget, funded largely from regular resources.

351. Regarding the cost projections for humanitarian action, he said that these were continually adjusted according to changing situations. Every year, in line with the mandate from the Executive Board, which is expected to be approved as a decision at the present session, UNICEF presents to the Board, at its second regular session, an updated integrated resource plan indicating the revised projections.

352. On the question raised regarding the global and regional programme of UNICEF, he said that output 7 of each of the outcomes of the strategic plan, 2014-2017, related to this programme, as did specific results in the appended matrices.

353. Responding to the comments of delegations, the Executive Director said he especially welcomed those on the importance of innovation, as innovation in both management and programmes would produce efficiencies to achieve greater results.

354. He said that he took very seriously the suggestion made by some delegations to increase the amount of resources going to children, assuring delegations that UNICEF intended to be as ambitious as possible in this regard.

355. He also assured delegations that the percentage of the budget devoted to health and HIV was a percentage and not an overall number; the actual amount would slightly increase compared with the previous budget.

356. He cautioned that the projected increase in regular resources was a plan, not an accomplishment, and it was a little early to celebrate this welcome development. In this regard, however, he noted the extraordinary work done by the National Committees in raising resources and supporting the work of UNICEF for children.

357. UNICEF was already achieving efficiencies in management costs and would continue to support the achievement of efficiencies in the United Nations system as a whole. He said UNICEF would look into cutting the costs of travel, including for field visits of the Executive Board, but noted that the organization was under increasing pressure to attend more and more events around the world.

358. Finally, responding to the suggestion to further develop competencies regarding normative standards and evaluation, he commented that the seventh focus area of the integrated budget and strategic plan, on social inclusion, emphasized both legal and normative frameworks, including, for example, the important work to overcome stigma for children with disabilities.

359. The Executive Board adopted decision 2013/20 (see annex).

E. Private fundraising: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2012 (item 7)

360. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, the Director of PFP presented the report (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L/5).

361. Delegations welcomed the report, noting the considerable amount of funds generated from private sources. They recognized with appreciation the fundraising contributions of UNICEF and the National Committees, along with their outreach activities.

362. Several delegations welcomed the disclosure of fundraising expenses and income in the integrated budget of UNICEF, saying that it increased transparency, and they requested more information about the benefits and drawbacks of including private fundraising in the integrated budget. Others asked to be updated on the ongoing review of PFP and the possible impact of private fundraising on budgeting and planning for 2014-2017.

363. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees noted that the National Committees had exceeded their aggressive fundraising goals,

contributing almost one third of the UNICEF operating budget for 2012, with almost 90 per cent of the private sector contribution of $903 million raised by National Committees. The National Committees appreciated their partnership with colleagues at PFP and the Division of Communication in raising awareness of the UNICEF response to the emergencies in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Middle East region and contributing $80 million for emergencies. Since 2008, regular resources income had more than doubled, he said, increasing from $60 million to $130 million in 2012. The 36 National Committees represented 1.1 billion people, and since 1947 the unique partnership had raised $12 billion for UNICEF. The National Committees were eager to continue the collaboration, particularly in support of the new strategic plan.

364. In response, the Executive Director said the activities of the National Committees were vital to UNICEF; their ambitious fundraising targets allowed the organization to be ambitious in its strategic plan to realize children's rights over the next four years. The growing success of the National Committees was a reflection not only of their competence and dedication but also of the extraordinary public support worldwide for children and the work of UNICEF. He noted that while the work of National Committees was included in the integrated budget, 2014-2017, UNICEF had to be careful about how the contribution was reflected so that the independent legal status of the Committees was recognized.

365. The Director of PFP thanked delegations for their supportive comments and confirmed that UNICEF would report to the Executive Board on the review of PFP, along with more detailed information on the new PFP plan that would accompany the submission of the PFP budget at the first regular session of the Executive Board in February 2014.

F. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association (item 8)

366. The Chairperson commended the Executive Director for his opening remarks regarding the courage and sacrifice of staff serving in crisis situations and thanked Executive Board members for the tribute they paid to the staff. He described some of the key challenges that the 11,400 staff members of UNICEF faced regarding staff safety, job security and equity. In this regard, he cited a number of measures that would increase staff safety and security around the world. He also highlighted several top concerns of staff: the impact of the efficiency and effectiveness exercise and proposed shared service centres on job security; the extension of the retirement age to 65 years; the need for greater gender and geographical diversity; and inequities linked to staff salaries and benefits based on staff categories. He acknowledged that some of these were United Nations system-wide issues.

367. In response, the Executive Director said that he and relevant senior staff and offices agreed with most of the security issues raised and were following up on these and other staff issues within UNICEF and with the United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations agencies. Regarding the other issues, progress was being made. It was agreed, for example, that maternity leave should be six months. He said he understood the concerns of staff related to the organization-wide efficiency and effectiveness exercise but noted that it was being carried out with complete transparency. Moreover, mitigation measures were being discussed for staff

members who might be affected. He stressed that UNICEF had an obligation to improve management and operations in order to better serve children. Regarding gender and geographical balance, this issue was a priority for UNICEF. Although some progress had been made, more would be pursued in the future.

368. The President noted that the Executive Board appreciated the opportunity to hear on a regular basis the sentiments and concerns of UNICEF staff members. He further welcomed the efforts of the staff and management to deal with concerns through dialogue. He said that the Executive Board recognized that UNICEF staff demonstrated enthusiasm in their engagement for the best interest and the rights of children.

G. Other matters (item 9)

Special focus session on the work of UNICEF for children with disabilities

369. The UNICEF Senior Advisor on Disability made a multimedia presentation on the work of UNICEF for children with disabilities and explained the organization's "disability vision" featured in the new strategic plan. The Chair of the International Disability Alliance, Yannis Vardakastanis, praised his organization's collaboration with UNICEF through the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities and the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In response, the Executive Director affirmed that reaching children with disabilities was at the heart of the UNICEF commitment to equity within the post-2015 agenda.

370. Delegations welcomed the special focus session and the presence of representatives of the International Disability Alliance. Many referred to the 2013 *State of the World's Children* report, which focuses on children with disabilities, noting the pragmatic, forward-looking approach and leadership of UNICEF on this issue. Some highlighted the immensity of the problem: globally, more than 1 billion persons are living with disabilities, and 80 per cent of them reside in developing countries. Disability particularly affects the elderly and children, including those whose caretakers are disabled, increasing their vulnerability to marginalization and poverty. Poverty, in turn, increases the risk of disability. Noting the gaps between policy vision and practice, many delegations said they looked forward to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on disability and development as an opportunity to make the post-2015 development framework inclusive of disability, especially since the issue had not been addressed in the Millennium Development Goals.

371. Numerous delegations stressed the importance of mainstreaming children with disabilities. It was noted that several areas needed particular attention. These included attitudinal changes, scaling up investments and improving the recognition of synergies between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the human rights framework. Some delegations said that organizations that worked for the rights of persons with disabilities and civil society had a special role to play in monitoring both conventions. They must remind Governments and United Nations organizations that children with disabilities must be included, and indeed participate, in all relevant development activities, especially those pertaining to access to health and education and protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.

372. Delegations congratulated UNICEF for focusing on children with disabilities in the new strategic plan. Several asked UNICEF to assist developing countries that lacked sufficient resources for increasing accessibility to services. Some encouraged UNICEF to develop a research framework for systematically reporting on results in improving the situation of children with disabilities. This would be particularly relevant for post-conflict situations, where traumatic experiences lead to a high proportion of cases of disability. Other delegations emphasized that children with disabilities should be given priority in thematic funding and the allocation of regular resources. Several delegations asked to be consulted on the disability action plan and updated on its implementation.

373. Several delegations reported on the experience of their countries in implementing government and community-based programmes for people with disabilities, including efforts to promote inclusion by supporting political participation, social security and inclusive education. UNICEF was encouraged to share its experiences, best practices and lessons learned with other United Nations agencies and partners.

374. In response, the Chair of the International Disability Alliance said that the next two years were critically important to making sure that the work of the past two decades on addressing disability would culminate in a post-2015 agenda inclusive of disability rights. In that regard, he applauded the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

375. The Senior Advisor on Disability emphasized that the vision of UNICEF was not to mainstream children with disabilities but to make sure that everything UNICEF did, and development in general, was accessible to all.

376. In conclusion, the Executive Director said that, despite the encouraging progress reported by several countries in addressing disability, the international community had a long way to go. He confirmed that UNICEF funding for work on disability would increase and that existing resources would be used more effectively. He acknowledged the importance of synergies between the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In closing, he affirmed the importance of statistics and research on children with disabilities, noting that if children were not counted, they would count for less than they should.

Provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2014 of the Executive Board

377. The Secretary of the Executive Board presented the provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2014 of the Executive Board, scheduled to take place from 4 to 7 February 2014.

H. Adoption of draft decisions (item 10)

378. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2013/15 to 2013/20 (see annex).

I. Closing statements (item 11)

379. In closing, the Executive Director thanked the Executive Board members for a productive session, noting with appreciation their useful ideas, constructive criticism and support for the future work of UNICEF. He thanked all those who had worked hard to make the session a success, mentioning in particular several staff members leaving the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board: the Secretary, Nicolas Pron, the Assistant Secretary, Christine Muhigana, and Sonia Stenerson, Documentation Assistant. He made a number of personnel announcements, including that Nina Nordström, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, would succeed Mr. Pron as Secretary of the Executive Board and that Gilles Fagninou, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Mongolia, would succeed Ms. Muhigana as Assistant Secretary.

380. The representative of a regional group noted that the UNICEF Board sessions had maintained not only a welcome familial feel but also a high standard of responsibility, which was unusual in the United Nations system. He attributed this largely to the experience and leadership of the President of the Executive Board for 2013, Mr. Viinanen. The President was to be thanked for this and for steering the Executive Board past some touchy political issues.

381. The Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Executive Board members for their constructive engagement during the three years of his tenure and thanked all UNICEF colleagues, in particular his team, for their hard work.

382. In his statement at his last formal Executive Board session, the President extended his appreciation to the facilitators and other participants for their constructive engagement in finalizing the decisions at the session, highlighting in particular the adoption of the new strategic plan and the integrated budget for 2014-2017. He also said that the presentations on programme cooperation and comments from members of the Executive Board had provided first-hand accounts of the opportunities and challenges that UNICEF and its partners faced in the field.

383. Expressing his gratitude to all the people who had facilitated the work of the Executive Board during the year, he paid special thanks to the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary. He commented that, without their tireless efforts and those of their team, the Executive Board would not be where it is today. He also thanked the Executive Director, his deputies, other UNICEF senior staff and the four Vice-Presidents for their excellent collaboration throughout the year. He encouraged Member States that had never before served on the Bureau to seize the opportunity, as it was rewarding to work towards realizing the rights of all children and improving the lives of the most vulnerable. He commented that his tenure as president in 2013 marked the first time that Finland had served in this position. He said that it had been an honour and an unforgettable experience.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2013

2013/1
Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council (E/2013/6-E/ICEF/2013/3);

2. *Encourages* UNICEF to continue to enhance reporting, taking into account the relevant guidance in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

3. *Decides* to transmit the above-mentioned report to the Economic and Social Council, along with a summary of the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session.

First regular session
8 February 2013

2013/2
Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board meetings (E/ICEF/2013/CRP.3);

2. *Requests* UNICEF to ensure consistency between the expected HIV/AIDS results in its medium-term strategic plan, 2014-2017, and the responsibilities of UNICEF within the 2012-2015 UNAIDS unified budget, results and accountability framework;

3. *Also requests* UNICEF, in coordination with UNAIDS, to implement, as appropriate, the relevant recommendations of the midterm review of the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV, in accordance with the mandate of UNICEF;

4. *Further requests* UNICEF to ensure that HIV/AIDS-related outcomes and outputs of its medium-term strategic plan, 2014-2017, are appropriately gender-sensitive in addressing the specific needs of children and adolescents, especially girls, and address the relevant gender equality-specific recommendations of the

midterm review and the UNICEF-specific elements of the UNAIDS Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV.

First regular session
8 February 2013

2013/3
Country programme document for Eritrea

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 2012/17 to consider for approval, on an exceptional basis, the draft country programme document for Eritrea at the first regular session of 2013 of the Executive Board;

2. *Also recalls* that an informal consultation on the draft country programme document for Eritrea (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.1) was held on 17 December 2012;

3. *Approves* the revised country programme document for Eritrea, with the aggregate indicative budget of $7,852,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $44,869,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2013-2016.

First regular session
8 February 2013

2013/4
Country programme document for Egypt

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decisions 2002/4, 2006/19 and 2008/17 on the country programme approval process;

2. *Notes* the request by Egypt to present the draft country programme document E/ICEF/2013/P/L.4 to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2013;

3. *Decides* to review and approve, on an exceptional basis, the draft country programme document for Egypt at the annual session of 2013 of the Executive Board.

First regular session
8 February 2013

2013/5
Road map towards an integrated budget, beginning in 2014, and update on cost recovery

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 2012/20 and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) decision 2012/27, which requested further development of the harmonized conceptual framework and calculation methodology for cost-recovery rates, and also recalls the need to implement General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in particular chapter II, section D, on ensuring full cost recovery, proportionally from core and non-core funding sources, and providing incentives to increase core funding;

2. *Recognizes* that full cost recovery, proportionally from core and non-core resources, will lead to fewer resources being drawn from core resources to finance the management costs of non-core contributions, and a larger share of core resources being allocated to programme activities, thereby providing incentives for core contributions;

3. *Approves* the harmonized methodology for calculating cost-recovery rates presented in document DP-FPA/2012/1-E/ICEF/2012/AB/L.6, which is further developed in document DP-FPA/2013/1-E/ICEF/2013/8, and welcomes the increased transparency and proportionality in the new harmonized framework;

4. *Endorses* a general, harmonized cost-recovery rate of 8 per cent for non-core contributions that will be reviewed in 2016, with the possibility of increasing the rate if it is not consistent with the principle of full cost recovery, proportionally from core and non-core funding sources, as mandated by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; and decides that the review of the cost-recovery rate will take place after the analysis and independent assessment of the reports mentioned in paragraphs 15 and 17, below;

5. *Underscores* that the principle of harmonized rates will also apply to differentiated cost-recovery rates, with the aim of promoting collaboration among United Nations organizations and avoiding competition in resource mobilization, and further endorses the following differentiated cost-recovery rate structure:

(a) A harmonized 1 per cent reduction for the thematic contributions at the global, regional and country level in UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF (8 per cent – 1 per cent = 7 per cent), with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) maintaining the 8 per cent as a temporary arrangement;

(b) Maintaining the existing preferential rates for government cost-sharing, South-South contributions and private-sector contributions;

6. *Decides* that existing agreements will be honoured using the previous cost-recovery rates and that new or renewed agreements will comply with the present decision;

7. *Also decides* that, on an exceptional basis and when the urgency of the circumstances requires, the Executive Director of UNICEF may consider granting a waiver of the cost-recovery rates on a case-by-case basis, taking into account specific priorities, modalities that incur lower management costs, and harmonization goals, and that the Executive Board will be informed of these waivers in the annual financial reports;

8. *Further decides* that the new cost-recovery methodology and related rates will be applied as of 1 January 2014;

9. *Notes* the guiding principles of the integrated budget contained in (a) the joint note of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF on steps taken towards the integrated budget and the mock-up of the integrated budget, submitted at the second regular session 2012, and (b) the mock-up of the integrated resource plan, with a harmonized presentation of the cost-recovery amount, contained in table 6 of document DP-FPA/2013/1-E/ICEF/2013/8;

10. *Reiterates* the need for regular consultations with the Executive Board on the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, and requests UNICEF to present for review the informal draft integrated budget, including core and non-core resources, as a part of the discussion of its draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, at the annual session 2013;

11. *Requests* UNICEF to provide fully transparent and consistent costing proposals that will enable contributors to understand those costs that are directly charged to programmes and projects, as well as the cost-recovery rate that is applied;

12. *Stresses* the need for increasingly efficient and transparent use of the cost-recovery resources, and requests that UNICEF provide, in the annual reporting of the Executive Director to the Executive Board, the amounts received from cost recovery and the use thereof;

13. *Requests* UNICEF to further pursue efficiency and cost effectiveness with a view to reducing management costs, in the effort to minimize the necessary cost-recovery rate, as mandated by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and to include information and analysis in this regard in the midterm review of its integrated budget;

14. *Also requests* UNICEF to prepare an integrated budget proposal, based on the above approved cost-recovery rates and the conceptual framework of the integrated budget;

15. *Further requests* UNICEF, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, to include in the midterm review of its integrated budget, information on the implementation of the approved cost-recovery rates, including the approved underlying calculation methodology and the inclusion of each cost category, the actual cost-recovery rates for the two previous financial years, and an analysis of compliance with the principle of full cost recovery, funded proportionally from core and non-core resources, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 67/226;

16. *Requests* UNICEF, in the context of the midterm review of its integrated budget, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, to recommend

adjustments to the approved cost-recovery rates, as required, to be presented at the annual session 2016 of the Executive Board;

17. *Requests* that an independent and external assessment be performed in 2016 on the consistency and alignment of the new cost-recovery methodology with General Assembly resolution 67/226.

First regular session
8 February 2013

2013/6
Private fundraising: 2013 workplan and proposed budget

A. Private Fundraising and Partnerships budgeted expenditures for 2013 fiscal year

The Executive Board

1. Approves for the fiscal year 2013 (1 January to 31 December) budgeted expenditures of $132.4 million, as summarized in the table below and detailed in column I of table 3 document E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.1.

(Millions of United States dollars)

Cost of goods and inventory overhead	13.0
Investment funds	37.4
Direct expenses (excluding cost of goods)	22.1
Indirect expenses	59.9
Total expenditures, consolidated	**132.4**

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF:

(a) To incur expenditures, as summarized in column I of table 3 in document E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.1, and to increase expenditures, up to the levels indicated in columns II and III of the same table, should the apparent proceeds from fundraising or cards and products sales increase to the levels indicated in columns II and III;

(b) To redeploy resources between the various budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above), up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2013 approved workplan.

B. Budgeted income for the 2013 season

The Executive Board

Notes that, for the period 1 January to 31 December 2013, Private Fundraising and Partnerships net proceeds are budgeted at $1,055 million, as shown in column I of table 3 in document E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.1.

C. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. *Renews* investment funds, with $37.4 million established for 2013;

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF to incur expenditures in the 2013 fiscal period related to the cost of goods and inventory overhead (purchase of cards and other products) for the 2014 fiscal year, up to $13 million, as indicated in the Private Fundraising and Partnerships 2013-2015 financial projections (table 5 in document E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.1);

3. *Approves* an interim one-month allocation for January 2014 of $13.24 million, to be absorbed in the annual Private Fundraising and Partnerships budget for 2014.

First regular session
8 February 2013

2013/7
Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan (E/ICEF/2013/11);

2. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to improve its results reporting, including in the last annual report of the current medium-term strategic plan, as requested in decision 2012/7;

3. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts to enhance results-based management, and in this regard, underscores the importance of developing a robust and harmonized results framework for the next strategic plan, 2014-2017, that is clear, simple, and demonstrates a complete result chain with expected results at each level;

4. *Acknowledges* the importance of reporting on gender equality results in all focus areas, and reiterates its request to comprehensively integrate these results into the annual report of the Executive Director.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/8
UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017: advancing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the consultative and participatory process conducted by UNICEF in developing the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017;

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the efforts by UNICEF to include the mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in the next UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017, and requests UNICEF to fully align the next strategic plan, 2014-2017, with these mandates, and further requests UNICEF to continue contributing to discussions with other funds and programmes towards developing a common approach to tracking implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

3. *Welcomes* the proposed structure and framework of the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, including its proposed set of outcome areas and implementation strategies, as well as the plan's attention to humanitarian action and gender equality, with the expectation that humanitarian action and gender equality will be fully integrated into the strategic plan, recognizing that the exact formulation of the outcomes and implementation strategies is still evolving, and requests UNICEF to prepare a final version of the draft based, inter alia, on the comments and inputs received from Member States during the annual session of the Executive Board of 2013 and during the ongoing process, which will require further consultations, clarification and amendments, for finalization and approval at its second regular session of 2013;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to provide more information, in time for the second regular session of 2013, on how results will be achieved, inter alia, by clearly demonstrating how outputs are directly attributable to UNICEF, how outputs and outcomes are linked, and how risks are assessed and will be managed, as a means to achieve the results;

5. *Welcomes* the structure and approach of the integrated results and resources framework of the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, while recognizing that the exact formulation of the indicators, risks and assumptions in the annex to the draft strategic plan, 2014-2017, is still evolving, and requests UNICEF to prepare a final version of the draft and the annex in consultation with Member States for finalization and approval at the second regular session of the Executive Board of 2013;

6. *Notes* that the exact formulation of the results framework baselines, milestones and targets in the annex is still evolving, and requests UNICEF to further develop them in consultation with Member States, with a view to their finalization by the annual session of the Executive Board of 2014;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to provide further information in time for the second regular session of 2013 on the way in which the organization will work together and divide labour within the United Nations system, including with other funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system, taking into account their respective mandates, in order to enhance coherence and

avoid overlap and duplication, with the aim of improving results on the ground and delivery for programme countries;

8. *Also requests* UNICEF to fully take into account the views of the Member States in finalizing the strategic plan, 2014-2017, and the annex, as well as the integrated budget, 2014-2017, for adoption at the second regular session of 2013.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/9
Report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the report on the progress of gender equality work in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/12), in line with the end-of-cycle review of the strategic priority action plan for gender equality for 2010-2013, including the presentation of progress, challenges and the way forward;

2. *Takes note* of the significant progress on leadership commitment, inter-agency partnerships, improved planning and reporting processes, and greater ownership at regional and country levels, and further notes with concern the shortcomings in the achievement and monitoring of gender-sensitive results, the lack of human and financial resources and the lack of gender expertise;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to develop a new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, aligned with the UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017, taking into account the findings, recommendations and lessons learned identified in the end-of-cycle review and the report itself;

4. *Also requests* UNICEF to develop strategies, as part of the new gender equality action plan, to address each of the challenges identified in the report (E/ICEF/2013/12), such as technical capacity, expertise and resource allocation for gender equality and empowerment of women, at the corporate level, and, at the country level based on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

5. *Further requests* UNICEF to develop a performance management plan that includes a results framework, and a plan for monitoring, evaluation and reporting, as a part of the new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, expanding on and in line with the gender-sensitive results and sex-disaggregated indicators that will be included in the UNICEF strategic plan for 2014-2017;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to cost and allocate adequate funds for the new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, and to have this clearly described in the integrated budget;

7. *Also requests* UNICEF to report annually on progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women and on the implementation of the new gender equality action plan for 2014-2017, with the first report to be presented at the annual session of the Executive Board in 2014.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/10
Draft country programme document for Egypt

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 2013/4 to review and approve, on an exceptional basis, the draft country programme document for Egypt at its annual session of 2013;

2. *Approves* the draft country programme document for Egypt (E/ICEF/2013/P/L.3), with the aggregate indicative budget of $12,879,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $32,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period July 2013 through December 2017.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/11
Draft common country programme document for Rwanda

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* its decision 2012/10 to approve the draft common country programme document for Rwanda at its annual session of 2013;

2. *Approves* the draft common country programme document for Rwanda (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-WFP/DCCP/2013/RWA/1 and Add.3), with the aggregate indicative budget of $41,250,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $79,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2013-2018.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/12
Draft country programme and common country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country and common country programmes of cooperation:

Region country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document*
The Americas and the Caribbean				
Cuba	2014-2018	3 750 000	9 500 000	E/ICEF/2013/P/L.2
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Rwanda draft common country programme[a]	2013-2018			DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-WFP/ DCCP/2013/RWA/1 and Add.3
Middle East and North Africa				
Egypt[b]	July 2013-Dec. 2017			E/ICEF/2013/P/L.3
South Asia				
Bhutan draft common country programme results and resources framework	2014-2018	4 570 000	21 000 000	DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF/ DCCP/ 2013/BTN/1 and Add.3
West and Central Africa				
Benin	2014-2018	26 003 000	43 997 000	E/ICEF/2013/P/L.4
Congo	2014-2018	6 145 000	45 000 000	E/ICEF/2013/P/L.5
Niger	2014-2018	94 078 000	104 827 000	E/ICEF/2013/P/L.6
Nigeria	2014-2017	203 948 000	304 000 000	E/ICEF/2013/P/L.7
Togo	2014-2018	17 337 000	53 000 000	E/ICEF/2013/P/L.8

[a] See Executive Board decision 2013/11.
[b] See Executive Board decision 2013/10.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/13
Evaluation

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/13);

2. *Recalls* that the mandate of the evaluation function is to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of UNICEF programmes and interventions as well as the sustainability of results;

3. *Welcomes* the evidence presented in the report of continued strengthening of the evaluation function at the decentralized level, and encourages UNICEF to take further steps to address shortcomings related to evaluation coverage and to the quality of decentralized evaluations;

4. *Takes note* of the key performance indicators tracking the effectiveness of the evaluation system and the administrative data on human and financial resources;

5. *Notes* the positive work to strengthen the skills, capacities and systems of national partners and to strengthen South-South learning;

6. *Welcomes* the preparation of the revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF, consistent with the norms and standards developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group as a professional network of units responsible for evaluation in the United Nations system;

7. *Endorses* the revised evaluation policy of UNICEF (E/ICEF/2013/14);

8. *Reaffirms* the central role played by the evaluation function in UNICEF;

9. *Emphasizes* that the Evaluation Office will continue to report directly to the Executive Board through its annual report on the evaluation function, and that the Director of the Evaluation Office will continue to report administratively to the Executive Director;

10. *Requests* UNICEF to present a written statement providing the management perspective on issues raised in the annual report on the evaluation function, to be made available well in advance of the relevant session of the Executive Board;

11. *Also requests* UNICEF to allocate sufficient resources to the Evaluation Office to be shown in a separate budget line in the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, to be presented for adoption at the second regular session 2013;

12. *Further requests* UNICEF, while implementing the evaluation policy, to track expenditure for decentralized evaluations and ensure timeliness of management responses;

13. *Calls upon* UNICEF to continue to conduct evaluations of operations at the country level in close consultation with national Governments and other national partners, as appropriate, and to assist Governments and other partners in the development of national evaluation capacities;

14. *Encourages* UNICEF to use national evaluation systems to the extent possible and to continue to incorporate capacity-building mechanisms into programme design and implementation, and to ensure that evaluations are responsive to national demand;

15. *Requests* UNICEF to report on steps taken to ensure relevant evaluation results are systematically considered and used in preparing key policies, strategies and programmes;

16. *Takes note* of the thematic synthesis report on evaluation of humanitarian action (E/ICEF/2013/15);

17. *Appreciates* the presentation and analysis in the report, and looks forward to future thematic synthesis reports, as requested in decision 2012/12;

18. *Requests* UNICEF to present a full management response to the recommendations in the thematic synthesis reports presented to the Executive Board;

19. *Also requests* UNICEF to address key gaps in the evaluation coverage of its humanitarian interventions, while continuing to improve the quality of evaluations in this field.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/14
Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2012 annual report to the Executive Board

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2012 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.2), the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2012 annual report to the Executive Director, and the UNICEF management response to the annual report of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for 2012 (E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.3);

2. *Welcomes* the ongoing commitment of UNICEF to greater accountability and transparency and, in this regard, welcomes the implementation of the decision on public disclosure of the internal audit reports;

3. *Expresses* its continuing support for strengthening the internal audit and investigation functions of UNICEF;

4. *Takes note* of the work undertaken by UNICEF to implement outstanding audit recommendations, and encourages UNICEF to implement urgently the outstanding recommendations that remain;

5. *Notes with appreciation* the increased number of joint audits, and encourages UNICEF to work collaboratively with other United Nations development organizations and to find opportunities for further joint approaches, and, in addition, underscores the importance of the review of the harmonized approach to cash transfers, which should provide clear guidance for adequate application of this approach jointly developed by the organizations;

6. *Underscores* the importance of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for UNICEF and, in this regard, requests UNICEF to assess and ensure that the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations has the level of human and financial resources, based on an assessment of risks facing the organization, to respond adequately to the needs for audit, investigations and advisory services, and requests UNICEF to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for such purposes when the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, is presented to the Executive Board, with special emphasis being paid to the investigation function;

7. *Takes note* of the implementation by UNICEF of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Annual session
21 June 2013

2013/15
Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2014

The Executive Board

Adopts the programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2014 as a flexible framework subject to revisions as appropriate in the course of the year.

First regular session *4-7 February 2014*	*Annual session* *3-6 June 2014*	*Second regular session* *9-12 September 2014*
Organizational and procedural matters	**Organizational and procedural matters**	**Organizational and procedural matters**
Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board *(A)*		Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2015
(8 January 2014)[a]		
Programme and policy matters	**Programme and policy matters**	**Programme and policy matters**
Programme cooperation:	Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the UNICEF strategic plan[b] *(A)*	Programme cooperation:
Adoption of revised country programme documents *(A)*	• UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit *(I)*	Adoption of revised country and common country programme documents *(A)*
Draft country programme document for Kenya *(A)*	Final results framework of the UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017 *(D)*	Draft country and common country programme documents *(A)*
Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board meetings *(I)*	Report on progress of work in gender equality and empowerment of women in UNICEF *(D)*	Regional summaries of midterm reviews of country programmes *(D)*
Costed UNICEF Gender Equality Action Plan, 2014-2017 *(D)*	Programme cooperation:	
Thematic discussion on the work of UNICEF in humanitarian situations *(D)*	Draft country and common country programme documents *(A)*	
	Extensions of ongoing country programmes *(A)*	
Evaluation, audit and oversight matters	**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters**	**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters**
Global thematic evaluations *(D)*	Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF, and management response *(A)*	
	Evaluation synthesis report and management response *(D)*	
	Report of the Ethics Office *(I)*	

First regular session *4-7 February 2014*	*Annual session* *3-6 June 2014*	*Second regular session* *9-12 September 2014*
	Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2013 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response *(A)*	
Resources, financial and budgetary matters	**Resources, financial and budgetary matters**	**Resources, financial and budgetary matters**
UNICEF annual financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2012 and report of the Board of Auditors *(I)*		Private fundraising: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2013 *(D)*
Private fundraising: 2014 workplan and proposed budget *(A)*		
Pledging event		
Other matters	**Other matters**	**Other matters**
	Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association	
	Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board *(I)*	

[a] This date is tentative.
[b] A separate Data Companion is available under this agenda item.

The Executive Board considers four types of agenda items:
(i) *For action (A)*: The Executive Board is expected to discuss and adopt a decision under the agenda item. The secretariat prepares official documentation and a draft decision for consideration by the Executive Board;
(ii) *For discussion (D)*: The Executive Board is expected to discuss the official documentation prepared by the secretariat. The secretariat does not prepare a draft decision, but the Executive Board may opt to take a decision under the agenda item;
(iii) *For information (I)*: The secretariat prepares documentation for information at the request of the Executive Board. The secretariat does not prepare a draft decision, but the Executive Board may opt to take a decision under the agenda item;
(iv) *Oral reports (O)*: Oral reports are presented at the request of the Executive Board. They are accompanied by short, informal background documents.

Second regular session
6 September 2013

2013/16
UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017
Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* the UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017, as contained in documents E/ICEF/2013/21 and Add.1;

2. *Welcomes* the progress in linking resources to results;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the consultative process undertaken by UNICEF in developing the strategic plan;

4. *Also notes with appreciation* the efforts by UNICEF to align its strategic plan, 2014-2017, with the mandates of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

5. *Requests* UNICEF to implement the strategic plan, taking into account the guidance provided by General Assembly resolution 67/226 and to continue to contribute to strengthening the accountability, effectiveness and coherence of the United Nations development system;

6. *Notes with appreciation* the inclusion of specific indicators for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review as part of a common approach of the funds and programmes;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to implement the strategic plan while developing and refining complementary, publicly available documentation in consultation with Members States and other stakeholders, including:

(a) Refinement of indicators and development of baselines, milestones and targets as contained in document E/ICEF/2013/21/Add.1, by the annual session of 2014;

(b) Refinement of the Supplementary Programme Note outlining the theory of change, by the annual session of 2014;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNICEF to present a midterm review of the UNICEF strategic plan, 2014-2017, to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2016.

Second regular session
6 September 2013

2013/17
UNICEF programme cooperation
Draft country and area programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country and area programmes of cooperation:

Region country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2013*
Americas and the Caribbean				
Mexico	2014-2018	3 770 000	36 000 000	P/L.15
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Namibia	2014-2018	3 770 000	27 000 000	P/L.16

Region country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2013/*
Middle East and North Africa				
Gulf Area subregional programme	2014-2017	–	9 000 000	P/L.17

Second regular session
6 September 2013

2013/18
Request by Kenya to present the draft country programme document for Kenya to the UNICEF Executive Board at its first regular session of 2014

The Executive Board

Recalling its decisions 2002/4, 2006/19 and 2008/17 on the country programme approval process,

1. *Notes* the request by Kenya to present, on an exceptional basis, draft country programme documents to the respective Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, of UNICEF and of the World Food Programme at their first regular sessions of 2014;

2. *Decides* to consider, on an exceptional basis, the draft country programme document for Kenya at the first regular session of 2014 of the UNICEF Executive Board;

3. *Also decides* that, in accordance with its decisions 2002/4, 2006/19, and 2008/17, the revised country programme document will be posted on the UNICEF Executive Board website no later than six weeks after the discussion at the Executive Board, and that the country programme document will be approved by the Executive Board, on a no-objection basis without presentation or discussion, at its annual session of 2014, unless at least five members have informed the secretariat, in writing before the session, of their wish to bring the country programme document before the Executive Board.

Second regular session
6 September 2013

2013/19
UNICEF programme cooperation
Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves the two-year extension for Côte d'Ivoire, the extension of two and a half years for South Sudan, the second one-year extensions for Guinea-Bissau and Mali, the one-year extension following a two-year extension for Paraguay, and the

third one-year extensions for Madagascar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia, as presented in table 1 in document E/ICEF/2013/P/L.18.

Second regular session
6 September 2013

2013/20
The UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017, in response to the request of the Executive Board in its decision 2009/20 to present a single, integrated budget that includes all UNICEF budgetary categories, with an improved results focus and enhanced linkages with the strategic plan results, and harmonized in methodology and presentation, including on cost classification, attribution and recovery, with the integrated budgets of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);

2. *Approves* the integrated resource plan as the financial framework for the strategic plan, 2014-2017, based on projections of resources available, utilization and working capital required for liquidity;

3. *Also approves* to raise the minimum level of regular resources allocation to single country programmes from $750,000 to $850,000, and requests UNICEF to include information on its implementation in the annual reporting to the Executive Board for 2014;

4. *Further approves*, for the global and regional programme, a budget from regular resources of $180.0 million, subject to the availability of resources, and a ceiling from other resources of $528.4 million, subject to the receipt of contributions to other resources, for 2014-2017;

5. *Approves* an appropriation for the institutional budget, 2014-2017, of $1,978.1 million to cover the costs of development effectiveness, United Nations development coordination, management activities and, within special purpose activities, capital investments, and notes that the projected funding for the appropriation is $1,155.1 million from regular resources and $823.0 million from cost recovery from other resources;

6. *Notes*, in addition to the appropriation of $1,978.1 million, the projected funding for the institutional budget of $116.4 million, from other resources, for development effectiveness and United Nations development coordination, subject to the receipt of contributions to other resources;

7. *Also notes* in this regard the increased allocation to the Evaluation Office, in line with the new evaluation policy approved by the Executive Board in its decision 2013/13;

8. *Further notes* the increased allocation for the investigation function of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations as requested in decision 2013/14, and reiterates its request to UNICEF to keep the Executive Board informed about the

need for human and financial resources to carry out the functions of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations;

9. *Notes*, within special purpose activities, the projected utilization of resources for:

(a) The amounts required in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNICEF to defray the costs of UNICEF administration of special accounts on behalf of others, including procurement services and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children;

(b) Private sector fundraising, for which budgets will be submitted annually for consideration and approval by the Executive Board at its first regular session;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to:

(a) Provide actual financial information in the format of the integrated resource plan and to assess performance against the integrated budget in his annual report to the Executive Board;

(b) Submit to the Executive Board for approval annually at its second regular session an updated integrated resource plan, following review of the financial projections on which the plan is based;

(c) Submit to the Executive Board, in conjunction with the midterm review of the integrated budget, information on the actual implementation of the revised cost-recovery methodology, together with any related recommendations, at the annual session of 2016, as requested by the Executive Board in its decision 2013/5, and also to include in the midterm review an assessment of ways to enhance results-based budgeting and assessment of the resource allocation system;

(d) Take into account the recommendations provided in the Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions with regard to the implementation of the integrated budget, 2014-2017, and the preparation of the midterm review;

11. *Reiterates its request* to UNICEF to develop a costed Gender Equality Action Plan, 2014-2017, which would include a comprehensive gender analysis to further strengthen gender mainstreaming in the organization in support of the implementation of the strategic plan.

Second regular session
6 September 2013

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